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By Aubrey Hammond

Frontispiece

REGENCY LADIES

:: :: By LEWIS MELVILLE :: ::

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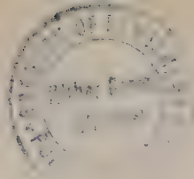


REGENCY LADIES

CHAPTER I

QUEEN CHARLOTTE (1744–1818)

"Plain Food and a Plain Wife"—Princess Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz—Her appearance—Her letter to the King of Prussia—It is much admired by George III—Her marriage to George III—The Coronation—A moral proclamation—Economies in the Royal Household—Lord Talbot and John Wilkes—The strict etiquette of the Court—Lampoons—Mrs. Siddons—"Peter Pindar"—The Ladies of the Bedchamber—The Queen's dull life—Her children—The Queen's day—Her jealousy of the King's relations—The Duchess of Brunswick—The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York—The struggle between the Queen and the Prince for the Regency—Her anger with her eldest son—Her death.

Give me a royal niche—it is my due
The virtuousest King the world ever knew.

I, through a decent reputable life,
Was constant to plain food and a plain wife.

THE "plain wife" was the Princess Charlotte Sophia, younger daughter of Charles Louis, Duke of Miroir, second son of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Lord Harcourt said that as a bride—she was then seventeen years old—she had a charming complexion, very pretty eye, and a good figure. Walpole, however, gave a less flattering description. "Her person was small and very lean, not well made, her face pale and homely, her nose somewhat flat and mouth very large. Her hair, however, was of a fine brown, and her countenance pleasing." As the years passed her want of personal charm became less noticeable, and Colonel Disbrowe, her Chamberlain, remarked one day, "I do think the bloom of her ugliness is going off."

There is a story that George's attention was drawn

to the young Princess Charlotte when he saw a copy of a letter that she wrote to the King of Prussia :

" May it please your Majesty, I am at a loss whether I should congratulate or condole with you on your late victory over Marshal Daun, November 3, 1760, since the same success which has covered you with laurels, has overspread the country of Mecklenburg with desolation. I know, Sire, that it seems unbecoming my sex, in this age of vicious refinement, to feel for one's country, to lament the horrors of war, or wish for the return of peace. I know you may think it more properly my province to study the arts of pleasing, or to inspect subjects of a more domestic nature ; but, however unbecoming it may be in me, I cannot resist the desire of interceding for this unhappy people. It was but a few years ago that this territory wore the most pleasing appearance ; the country was cultivated, the peasants looked cheerful, and the towns abounded with riches and festivity. What an alteration at present from such a charming scene ! I am not an expert at description, nor can my fancy add any horrors to the picture ; but surely even conquerors would weep at the hideous prospects now before me. The whole country, my dear country, lies one frightful waste, presenting only objects to excite terror, pity, and despair. The business of the husbandman and shepherd are discontinued. The husbandman and shepherd are become soldiers themselves, and help to ravage the soil they formerly cultivated. The towns are inhabited only by old men and women and children ; perhaps here and there a warrior, by wounds or loss of limbs, rendered unfit for service, left at his door ; his little children

hang round him, ask an history of every wound, and grow themselves soldiers, before they find strength for the field. But this were nothing, did we not feel the alternate insolence of either army as it happens to advance or retreat, in pursuing the operations of the campaign. It is impossible to express the confusion, even those who call themselves our friends create; even those from whom we might expect redress oppress with new calamities. From your justice, therefore, it is we hope relief. To you even women and children complain, whose humanity stoops to the meanest petition, and whose power is capable of repressing the greatest injustice."

"This is the lady," George III is said to have exclaimed to Lord Hertford after reading this letter, "whom I shall select for my Consort—here are lasting beauties—the man who has any mind may feast and not be satisfied. If the disposition of the Princess but equals her refined sense, I shall be the happiest man, as I hope, with my people's concurrence, to be the greatest monarch in Europe."

The marriage took place on September 7, 1761.

A fortnight later came the Coronation. In connection with that ceremony so many blunders were made that the Earl Marshal, Lord Effingham, felt it incumbent upon him to apologise to the King, which he did in the following unfortunate terms: "It is true, Sir, there has been some neglect, but I have taken care that the next coronation shall be regulated in the exactest manner possible."

The Court was dull to a degree that kept all away who had not for some reason or other to be in attendance. George had caused to be issued a proclamation

" for the encouragement of piety and virtue, and for preventing and punishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality," which proclamation was especially commended to the notice of " judges, mayors, sheriffs, justices of the peace, and all other over officers and ministers, both ecclesiastical and civil." Special stress was laid on the observance of the Sabbath Day, on which it was enjoined upon " all our loving subjects of whatever degree or quality soever " to abstain from dice, cards, or any game whatsoever. To set an example, George abolished the Sunday drawing-rooms, and would not even countenance an informal reception.

Drastic economies were enforced in the Household, and not without reason, but this was turned against the King, who was charged with meanness. Lord Talbot, the Lord Steward, was responsible for the changes. " I much admire many of his lordship's new regulations, especially those for the royal kitchen," Wilkes wrote in the *North Briton*. " I approve of the discharge of so many turnspits and cooks, who were grown of little use. It was high time to put an end to that too great indulgence in eating and drinking, which went by the name of Old English Hospitality, when the House of Commons had granted a poor, niggardly Civil List of only £800,000."

If these and other attacks were inspired by partisan spirit, it is not to be denied that the splendour of the Court was wholly laid aside, except for a few hours on the Royal Birthday or an occasional drawing-room. " Rarely during the first twenty years after his accession did the King join in any scene of public amusement, if we except the diversions of the theatre," Wraxall has written. " It was even an unusual event for His Majesty to sit at table with any of his courtiers or nobility."

He almost invariably took his meals in his private apartment with the Queen, and these repasts—though this is certainly not to the discredit of their Majesties—were of the simplest. A more temperate couple there was not in the kingdom. Still, the public thought it the duty of Royalty to make some sort of display—bread and circuses are an inalienable right of the subject. The result was a flood of lampoons, one of which may be quoted :

Cæsar, the mighty King who sway'd
The sceptre, was a sober blade ;
A leg of mutton and his wife
Were the chief comforts of his life.

The Queen, compos'd of different stuff,
Above all things ador'd her snuff,
Save gold, which in her great opinion,
Alone could rival snuff's dominion.

One of the few relaxations that their Majesties allowed themselves was a reading from Shakespeare. Mrs. Siddons was generally sent for, but was always kept standing during the entertainment, which want of consideration was duly pilloried by " Peter Pindar " :

Ready to drop to earth, she must have sunk,
But for a child that at the hardship shrunk—
A little *prince*, who marked her situation,
Thus, pitying, pour'd a tender exclamation :
" La ! Mrs. Siddons is quite faint indeed,
How pale ! I'm sure she cannot read :
She somewhat wants, her spirits to repair,
And would, I'm sure be happy in a *chair*."
What follow'd ? Why, the r—y—l pair arose
Surely enough, one fairly may suppose !
And to a room adjoining made retreat,
To let her, for one moment, *steal* a seat.

The Ladies of the Bedchamber were the Duchess of Hamilton, the Countess of Effingham, the Countess of

Northumberland, the Countess of Egremont, the Viscountess Weymouth, and the Viscountess Bolingbroke. Beyond these, in her early days in England, the Queen saw no one but the King. "This continued till the first child, the Prince of Wales, was born," Mrs. Harcourt noted in her Diary, "then the Nurse and Governess, Lady Charlotte Finch, coming into the room was a little treat; but they had still for years no other society, till by degrees the Ladies of the Bedchamber came far more frequently, and latterly the society, for various reasons—the children growing up, the journeys, etc.—was much increased. Expecting to be a Queen of a gay Court, finding herself confined in a convent, and hardly allowed to think without the leave of her husband, checked her spirits, made her fearful and cautious to an extreme, and when the time came that amusements were allowed, her mind was formed to a different manner of life."

This solitude, it must be remembered in mitigation of her faults, was forced upon Charlotte when she was only seventeen. Like a good wife, however, she found good and sufficient reasons for the seclusion in which George immured her. "I am most truly sensible," she said, "of the dear King's great strictness, at my arrival in England, to prevent my making acquaintances, for he was always used to say that, in this country, it was difficult to know how to draw a line on account of the politics of the country, and that there never could be kept up a society without party, which was always dangerous for any woman to take part in, but particularly so for the royal family; and with truth do I assure you that I am not only sensible that he was right, but I feel thankful for it from the bottom of my heart."

The King presumably liked this quiet life, since it was his own choice. The Queen, however, when still

in her teens and then in the early twenties, must have hankered, girl-like, after some brightness and variety, in fact, there is little doubt that she was far from happy for many years. George was as much a martinet in his treatment of his Consort as in the discipline he ordained for his children.[1]

This was very loyal of the Queen, but there is no doubt that their mode of living, to which she became accustomed, had the deplorable effect of her endeavouring to bring up her children in the same isolation, with what disastrous results is well known.

The Queen as a bride read English every morning with Dr. Majendie. On her arrival in England she was almost totally unacquainted with the language, which gave an opening for the bitter wit of Lady Townshend, who, on hearing that Lady Northumberland had been appointed a Lady of the Bedchamber, remarked: "It is a proper appointment, for, as the Queen knows no English, that lady will teach her the vulgar tongue." Later in the day Charlotte did some needlework, and then walked with the King. In the evening in the country there was some singing or a game of cards; in town, an occasional visit to the theatre.

Presently, of course, there was the royal nursery, to which Charlotte could and did devote herself. She saw the children bathed in the morning, and visited the schoolroom. As they grew up, the elder boys and girls were allowed to breakfast occasionally with their parents, and once a week the entire family went to

[1] George, Prince of Wales (1762–1830); Frederick, Duke of York (1763–1830); William, Duke of Clarence (1765–1837); Charlotte, afterwards Queen of Würtemberg (1766–1828); Edward, Duke of Kent (1767–1820); Augusta (1768–1840); Elizabeth, afterwards Princess of Hesse-Homburg (1778–1840); Ernest, Duke of Cumberland (1771–1851); Augustus, Duke of Sussex (1773–1843); Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge (1774–1850); Mary, afterwards Duchess of Gloucester (1776–1857); Sophia (1777–1848); Octavius (1779–83); Alfred (1780–82); Amelia (1782–1810).

Richmond. But it was always the King and Queen and the Princes and Princesses who went; not father and mother and sons and daughters. George was always a stickler for etiquette, even in the home circle.

"A good woman, a good wife, a tender mother, and an unmeddling Queen," Lord Chesterfield wrote of her; but Leigh Hunt, less courtier-like, wrote her down as a "plain, penurious, soft-spoken, decorous, bigoted, shrewd, overweening personage." She was jealous of the King's family, and when his sister, the Duchess of Brunswick, visited England she provided for her accommodation "a miserable little house in Pall Mall," and was careful that the Duchess should never see her brother alone. Friends Charlotte had none; but by her harshness, she created many enemies.

As the children grew up the Queen's troubles increased. The boys, without exception, were wild—a not unnatural reaction to the hard discipline to which they had been subjected. George, Prince of Wales, was, in his earlier years, her favourite; Frederick, Duke of York, the best beloved of the King; but, once they were given their own establishments, they rarely went to Court except on ceremonial occasions. Nor, when they married, was there anything approaching intimacy between their Princesses and the King and Queen. Charlotte's attitude towards the Princess of Wales. which will presently be set out, was especially scandalous

The affection of the Queen for her eldest son scarcely survived the struggle for the Regency. In 1765 she had been appointed, with a Council, to execute the necessary functions of the provisional government, now in 1788 she expected the same treatment. This was foolish, because in 1765 the Prince of Wales was an infant, and now he was six-and-twenty, an age when

by law he was regarded as capable of administering the realm over which, in the ordinary course of nature, he would one day reign. The care of the King's person was entrusted to Charlotte, but she wanted a share in the government of the country, and this was denied her. There were scenes between the Prince of Wales in which she behaved violently. "To my extreme astonishment," His Royal Highness remarked subsequently, "she condescended to a species of warmth of reproaches into which nothing could have surprised or betrayed Her Majesty but a degree of passion which I had never witnessed or believed before to exist in Her Majesty." The Duke of York, who was present on one of these occasions, was actually moved to say to his mother, "I believe, Madam, you are as much deranged as the King." Probably Charlotte realised that, if the Prince of Wales became Regent, she would, to all intents and purposes, be shelved for the rest of her life—a prospect naturally not at all to her liking, and one against which she struggled with all the forces at her command. "She is playing the devil, and has all this time been at the bottom of the cabals and intrigues against the Prince," Sir Gilbert Elliot wrote. "It is believed that she was ready to accept the Regency, if the Prince has been advised to refuse it." When the King became permanently deranged in 1810, of course the trouble with the Queen did not arise again.

As the years passed, less and less was heard of the Queen, who sunk deeper and deeper into seclusion at the Palace at Kew, where her death, in 1818, passed almost unnoticed.

CHAPTER II

LADY SARAH LENNOX (1745–1826)

A rival to Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz—George II charmed by Lady Sarah Lennox—Lady Sarah at Court attracts the attention of the Prince of Wales—Her beauty and charm—The Prince, on his accession to the throne, wishes to marry her—A conversation—Lady Sarah's flirtation with Lord Newbattle—The King expresses his wish to her—His engagement to Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz announced—Lady Sarah unconcerned—A bridesmaid at the royal wedding—She marries William Bunbury—Her elopement with Lord William Gordon—Divorce—She marries the Hon. George Napier—Her famous sons—Death—Lady Sarah and the King.

THERE was at one time a serious rival to Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz for the high position of Consort of George III.

This was Lady Sarah Lennox, youngest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Richmond, and a granddaughter of Charles II by Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth. She had attracted the attention of George II in 1750, when she was five years old, by walking up to him in Kensington Gardens, and saying, "Comment vous portez-vous, Monsieur le roi? Vous avez une grande et belle maison ici, n'est-ce pas?" The King was charmed with her, and she was often sent for to come to him at the Palace. She went to Ireland for some years, but, at the age of thirteen, she returned to London when she stayed with her eldest sister, Lady Georgiana Caroline, who in 1744 had secretly married Henry Fox In 1762 Lady Georgiana Caroline was created a peeress in her own right; a year later her husband was created Baron Holland of Foxley, Wiltshire. She was the mother of Charles James Fox.

Lady Sarah went again to Court on her return to London, and now it was the Prince of Wales who was much attracted by her looks and fascinated by her charm. At the age of fifteen she was already lovely. "Her beauty if not easily described, otherwise than by saying she had the finest complexion, most beautiful hair, and prettyest person that ever was seen, with a sprightly air, a pretty mouth, and remarkably fine teeth, and excess of bloom in her cheeks, little eyes—but this is not describing her, for her great beauty was a peculiarity of countenance, that made her at the same time different from and prettyer than any other girl I ever saw."[1] So wrote Henry Fox; and Horace Walpole, writing to George Montagu in 1761, entirely endorsed this opinion: "There was a play at Holland House acted by children, not all children; for Lady Sarah Lennox and Lady Susan Fox-Strangways played the women. It was *Jane Shore*. Charles Fox was Hastings. . . . The two girls were delightful, and acted with so much nature that they appeared the very things they represented. Lady Sarah was more beautiful than you can conceive; her very awkwardness gave an air of truth to the sham of the part, and the antiquity of the time kept up by the dress, which was taken out of Montfaucon. Lady Susan was dressed from Jane Seymour. I was more struck with the last scene between the two women than ever I was when I have seen it on the stage. When Lady Sarah was in white, with her hair about her ears, and on the ground, no Magdalen of Correggio was half so lovely and expressive."

The Prince of Wales became more and more infatuated with Lady Sarah, and after his accession began seriously

[1] The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to *The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*. Edited by the Countess of Ilchester and Lord Stavordale. (John Murray, 1901.)

to consider whether he should not invite her to share his crown. His mother, the Queen Dowager, and Lord Bute were, of course, entirely against this, as it would first undermine and probably in the end destroy their influence with him. Henry Fox, naturally enough, was all in favour of such an alliance, though he was astute enough not openly to take any part in promoting it. Indeed, leaving Lady Sarah with his wife at Holland House, he paid frequent visits to his Thanet home. "Though Fox went himself to bathe in the sea, and possibly even to disguise his intrigues," wrote Walpole, who saw through the ruse, "he left Lady Sarah at Holland House, where she appeared in a field close to the great road (where the King passed on horseback) in a fancy habit making hay."

George, much in love as he was, proceeded warily. Instead of speaking direct with Lady Sarah on the matter he had at heart, he talked with her friend, Lady Susan Fox-Strangways (eldest daughter of Stephen, first Earl of Ilchester). The conversation has been recorded by Henry Fox:

"KING: 'You are going into Somersetshire; when do you return?'

"LADY SUSAN: 'Not before winter, Sir, and I don't know how soon in winter.'

"KING: 'Is there nothing will bring you back to town before winter?'

"LADY SUSAN: 'I don't know of anything.'

"KING: 'Would not you like to see a coronation?'

"LADY SUSAN: 'Yes, Sir. I hope I should come to see that.'

"KING: 'I hear it's very popular, my having put it off.'

"LADY SUSAN: (*Nothing.*)

"KING: 'Won't it be a much finer sight when there is a Queen?'

"LADY SUSAN: 'To be sure, Sir.'

"KING: 'I have had a great many applications from abroad, but I don't like them. I have had none at home; I should like that better.'

"LADY SUSAN: (*Nothing. Frightened.*)

"KING: 'What do you think of your friend? You know who I mean; don't you think her fittest?'

"LADY SUSAN: 'Think, Sir?'

"KING: 'I think none so fit.'"

The King then crossed the room and told Lady Sarah that he wished her to ask Lady Susan what he had been saying. Upon this Fox commented: "His Majesty is not given to joke, and this would be a bad joke too. Is it serious? Strange if it is, and a strange way of going about it."

The members of the Fox family were all agog with excitement, and impatiently awaited the next Court, which was held a week or so later. The King went to Lady Sarah, and learnt from her that his conversation with Lady Susan had been imparted to her. "Do you approve?" asked His Majesty. Lady Sarah, looking very cross, remained silent, and the King, after a moment, walked away.

What impelled Lady Sarah to upset the apple-cart was that she was heavily engaged in a flirtation with Lord Newbattle, who had been much in love with Lady Caroline Russell, but from whom she had, as a test of her charms, detached him. "It was really a commerce of vanity, not of love, on each side," Fox declared.

The King overcame his pique and pursued his suit.

His attentions to Lady Sarah at the Court ball on his Birthday on June 4, 1761, were more than usually marked. A fortnight later he said to her, " For God's sake, remember what I said to Lady Susan before you went to the country, and believe that I have the strongest attachment."

On July 8 the King in Council announced his forthcoming marriage with the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz !

This came as a great surprise to nearly everybody. It had been thought that the offer would certainly be made to Lady Sarah. There is a story that Lady Barrington said to Lady Sarah, "Do let me take the lead and go on before you this once, for you will never have another opportunity of seeing my beautiful back." On hearing of the engagement Lady Susan Fox-Strangways, Lady Sarah's most intimate friend, remarked humorously, " And I had almost thought myself Prime Minister."

Lady Sarah herself was but little concerned. " My mother," one of her sons, Henry Napier, wrote later, " would probably have been vexed, but her favourite squirrel happened to die at the same time, and his loss was more felt than that of a crown." Lady Sarah certainly was not grieved, but, at the same time, she was not quite so philosophical as would appear from her son's account. " I did not cry, I assure you, as I know you were set upon it that I was," she wrote to Lady Susan Fox-Strangways. " The thing I am most angry at is looking so like a fool, as I shall for having gone so often for nothing, but I don't much care ; if he was to change his mind again (which can't be though) and not give me a *very* good reason for his conduct, I would not have him, for if he is so weak as to be governed by everybody, I shall have but a bad time of it."

LADY SARAH LENNOX
After Sir Joshua Reynolds

[*p.* 26

She was certainly angry, and with every right, because "the hypocrite," as she called the King, came up to her at Court as usual, although he was already in negotiation for his future bride. "In short," she said, "his behaviour is that of a man who has neither sense, good nature, nor honesty." This stricture is not too severe; the only explanation of George's conduct is that he was overborne by his mother and Lord Bute, who brought him to believe that it was his duty to espouse a Princess.

The next meeting of the King and Lady Sarah took place a few days after the engagement was announced. "I went this morning to Court for the first time," the aggrieved young lady wrote to Lady Susan. "He looked frightened when he saw me, but, notwithstanding, came up, with what countenance I don't know, for I was not so gracious as ever to look at him; when he spoke our conversation was short. Here it is: 'I see riding is begun again, it's glorious weather for it now.' Answer: 'Yes, it is very fine'—and add to that a very cross and angry look on my side, and his turning away immediately, and you know the whole."

Lady Sarah, as "the first virgin in England," was chief bridesmaid at the royal wedding, and it was remarked by more than one who was present that George never took his eyes off her throughout the entire ceremony. This is not so surprising, even in the circumstances, if Horace Walpole was right when he said: "The [ten] bridesmaids, especially Lady Caroline Russell, Lady Sarah Lennox, and Lady Elizabeth Keppel, were beautiful figures. With neither features nor air, Lady Sarah was by far the chief angel."

Shortly after the royal wedding, on June 2, 1762, Lady Sarah, then seventeen years of age, married Charles,

eldest son of Sir William Bunbury, Bart., of Barton Hall and Milden Hall, Suffolk, to whose title and estates he succeeded in the following year. "To show himself more of a man," Walpole had written to Sir Horace Mann a few months before, "young Bunbury is going to marry Lady Sarah Lennox, who is very pretty, from exceeding bloom of youth; but as she has no features, and her beauty is not likely to last so long as her betrothed's, he will probably repent this step." Bunbury, who at the time of his marriage had just come of age, presently became a great patron of the Turf, and is famous in the annals of racing as the owner of Diomed, winner of the first Derby.

The union seems to have been happy enough at first, but Bunbury's devotion to sport increased year by year, and Lady Sarah was left largely to her own resources. She had, of course, being the beautiful woman she was, many admirers, and in one of them she became more than interested. This was Lord William Gordon, a younger son of the third Duke of Gordon, and a man of her own age. In December 1768 she gave birth to a daughter in her husband's house in Privy Gardens, Whitehall, but the father was not Sir Charles Bunbury, but Lord William Gordon.

It would appear that at one time she did not intend to avow the paternity, since she remained under Sir Charles's roof, and it was only belatedly, in the following February, that she ran away with her lover and her little girl. They stayed in the country for some time, but, yielding to the pressure increasingly exercised by the family, Lady Sarah, in November 1769, went to reside with her brother and her sister-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, at Goodwood. The Duke built her a house, and here she lived in retirement,

occupying herself with the education of her child. After Sir Charles divorced her in 1776 she resumed her maiden name. He survived until 1821.

With her marriage in 1781 to Colonel the Hon. George Napier, second son of Francis, fifth Baron Napier, a period of real happiness began. Of this marriage there were five sons and three daughters. The three eldest sons, Charles, George, and William, entered the Army and greatly distinguished themselves. George Napier died in 1804, but his widow survived, a charming, gracious, much-beloved lady, until 1826, when she passed away at the age of eighty-one.

In Lady Sarah's correspondence there is more than one reference to the exalted position that was so nearly hers, but she does not ever seem to have regretted that she missed it by, as it were, a hair's breadth. On the contrary, it is apparent that she regarded herself as fortunate in so having done, and in her later life, when her famous and devoted sons were gathered around her, she must more than once have compared them with the Royal Princes. "I am one who will keep the King's marriage-day with unfeigned joy and gratitude to Heaven that I am not in Her Majesty's place," she wrote in 1789 to Lady Susan. "It was the happiest day for me, inasmuch as I like to attend my dear sick husband better than a King. I like my sons better than I like royal sons, thinking them better animals, and more likely to give me comfort in my old age; and I like better to be a subject, than subject to the terrors of royalty in these days of trouble. It's pleasant to have lived to be satisfied of the great advantages of a lot which in those days I might have deemed unlucky.

"Ideas of fifteen and sixty-one cannot well assimilate; but mine began at fourteen, for, if you remember, I was

not near fifteen when my poor head began to be turned by adulation, in consequence of my supposed favour. In the year 1759, on the late Princess of Wales's birthday, November 30, I ought to have been in my nursery, and I shall ever think it was unfair to bring me into the world while a child. *Au reste,* I am delighted to hear the King is so well, for I am excessively partial to him. I always consider him as an old friend that has been in the wrong : but does one love one's friend less for being in the wrong, even towards oneself? *I* don't, and I would not value the friendship of those who measure friendship by my deservings. God help me if all my friends thought thus."

CHAPTER III

FRANCES BURNEY, AFTERWARDS MADAME D'ARBLAY (1752–1840)

Evelina published anonymously—Miss Burney's excitement at its success—She becomes a "lion"—Dr. Johnson's approval—Her play, *The Witlings*, adversely criticised—Her second novel, *Cecilia*, widely read—She makes the acquaintance of Mrs. Delany—Presented to the King and Queen—Offered a post in her Majesty's household—Her desire to refuse—She accepts reluctantly—She is unhappy at Court—The Schwellenberg—Ill-health—Her resignation is accepted—A small pension granted—M. d'Arblay—Miss Burney attracted by him—They become engaged—Her father's opposition withdrawn—Marriage—The birth of a son—Mme. d'Arblay's tragedy, *Edwy and Elvine*, a failure—Her third novel, *Camilla*, financially successful—In Paris—Mme. d'Arblay returns to England—Death of Dr. Burney—d'Arblay joins his wife—His death—Alexander d'Arblay—Mme. d'Arblay in old age—Edits her father's *Memoirs*—Her *Diary*.

THERE appeared anonymously in January 1778 a work of fiction, bearing the title, *Evelina; or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. The manuscript had been refused by James Dodsley, who would have nothing to do with a work to which no name was attached, and it had been offered to Lowndes, who agreed to publish it. The book created a very considerable stir in literary and social circles, and speculation was rife as to the authorship. Sir Joshua Reynolds expressed himself willing, even anxious, to pay fifty pounds for the name of the writer. The author was in a seventh heaven of delight, but her sense of humour saved her from losing her head.

"The year 1778 was ushered in by a grand and most important event!" she wrote, in high glee, in her *Diary*. "At the latter end of January the literary world was favoured with the first publication of the ingenious, learned, and most profound Fanny Burney! I doubt not

but this memorable affair will, in future times, mark the period whence chronologers will date the zenith of the polite arts in this island! This admirable authoress has named her most elaborate performance, *Evelina; or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World.* Perhaps this may seem a rather bold attempt and title for a female whose knowledge of the world is confined, and whose inclinations, as well as situation, incline her to a private and domestic life. All I can urge is, that I have not presumed to trace the accidents and adventures to which a 'young woman' is liable, but what it *appears* to a girl of seventeen: and so far as that, surely any girl who is past seventeen may safely do? The motto of my excuse shall be taken from Pope's 'Temple of Fame':

> 'In every work, regard the writer's end;
> None e'er can compass more than they intend.'"

Of course the secret was soon out. In fact, the proud father gave it away, although his daughter wrote to him, "As to Mrs. Thrale—your wish of telling her quite *unmans* me; I shook so when I read it that, had anybody been present, I must have betrayed myself." This simple maiden of five-and-twenty was a little given to running out of the room when a reference to *Evelina* was made; but all the same she very naturally enjoyed the fuss made of her, and was at pains to write down in the *Diary* each and every compliment paid to her.

And the compliments were many. No less a person than Dr. Johnson signified his approval, and that in no uncertain terms—he protested there were passages in the novel which might do honour to Richardson. Miss Burney was summoned to Streatham by Mrs. Thrale to meet Johnson at dinner. The great man was at his kindliest, and soon put the young authoress at her ease.

He was also at his most gallant. Talking of her book, " Oh, Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith is the man ! " cried he, laughing violently. " Harry Fielding never drew so good a character ! Such a fine varnish of low politeness ! Such a struggle to appear a gentleman ! Madam, there is no character better drawn anywhere—in any book, or by any author." Again speaking to the Thrales, he said, " I admire her for her observation, for her good sense, for her humour, for her discernment, for her manner of expressing them, and for all her writing talents." Not only Johnson, but all the Streatham set delighted to say pretty things—Reynolds, William Seward, Topham Beauclerk, and Sheridan, who advised her to write a play.

She was as much praised and as conspicuous at Tunbridge Wells or Bath as in town.

Evelina was a financial success—at least, for the publisher ; and it ran into three editions in a very short space of time. " *Evelina* continues to sell in a most wonderful manner ; a fourth edition is preparing, with cuts, designed by Mortimer just before he died, and executed by Hall and Bartolozzi," the author wrote proudly. She had received £20 for the book, and later on was presented with a further sum of £10. The publisher naturally was desirous of another book from her, but she was not to be hurried.

She took the advice of Sheridan, and wrote a play, *The Witlings*, with the assistance of Arthur Murphy. Before sending the manuscript to Sheridan, she had the good sense to submit it to her father and to Samuel Crisp, himself a disappointed dramatist. Dr. Burney would have none of it, and his daughter accepted his verdict. " The fatal knell, then, is knolled, and ' down among the dead men ' sink the poor ' Witlings '—for ever, and for ever, and for ever ! " she wrote to him.

" I give a sigh, whether I will or not, to their memory! for, however worthless, they were *mes enfants*, and one must do one's nature, as Mr. Crisp will tell you of the dog." Miss Burney took it well. " Partial faults may be corrected," she said ; " but what I most wished was, to know the general effect of the whole ; and, as that has so terribly failed, all petty criticisms would be needless. I shall wipe it all from my memory, and endeavour never to recollect that I ever wrote it."

Crisp endorsed the judgment of Dr. Burney. " Now, then, to the point," he wrote bluntly, " I have considered, as well as I am able, what you state as Mrs. Thrale's idea—of new-modelling the play ; and I observe what you say, that the pursuing this project is the only chance you have of bringing out anything this year, and that with hard fagging perhaps you might do that. I agree with you that for this year you say true ; but, my dear Fanny, don't talk of hard fagging. It was not hard fagging that produced such a work as *Evelina*!—it was the ebullition of true sterling genius—you wrote it because you could not help it—it came, and so you put it down on paper. Leave fagging and labour to him."

Miss Burney at once gave up for a while all idea of writing for the stage ; but, " fagging " or not, she could not refrain from writing. She devoted herself to the composition of another novel, and in the summer of 1782 appeared *Cecilia*, in five volumes. Two thousand copies were printed, and the edition was exhausted within three months. It had a great vogue, and was widely read, but, as regards merit, it is not to be compared with *Evelina*. It enhanced her popularity notwithstanding, and brought her the acquaintance of Mrs. Delany, eighty-two years of age at this time, the introduction being made by Mrs. Chapone. This friendship

had a great effect upon the course of Miss Burney's life. After the death of the Duchess of Portland, with whom Mrs. Delany had spent much of her time, the King granted her a house in Windsor. Both the King and Queen visited the old lady frequently, and so came to know the author, who was so often staying with her.

Very evidently their Majesties took a great liking to Miss Burney, and often conversed with her. Yet no one could have been more astonished than Miss Burney to receive in the summer of 1786 the offer of a post in the Royal Household. Madam Haggerdorn, one of the Queen's German attendants, had resigned and was about to return to her native land. The place was much sought after, but her Majesty bethought herself of Mrs. Delany's friend.

"Yesterday evening, while I was with Mrs. Delany," Miss Burney wrote to Miss Cambridge in June, "Mr. Smelt arrived from Windsor, and desired a private conference with her; and, when it was over, a separate one with me: surprising me not a little by entreating me to suffer some very home questions from him, relative to my situation, my views, and even my wishes with respect to my future life. At first, I only laughed; but my merriment a little failed me when he gave me to understand he was commissioned to make these enquiries by a great personage, who had conceived so favourable an opinion of me as to be desirous of undoubted information, whether or not there was a probability she might permanently attach me to herself and her family."

The Queen no doubt acted from the kindest motives. It may be presumed that she thought that for any of her subjects to be at Court, and in constant communication with her, must be the height of bliss. Not so did Miss Burney look upon the matter. It is really amusing to

read of her utter consternation on receiving the proposal.

Her first impulse was to refuse.

Poor Smelt was staggered; the offer of a post at Court, an offer unsolicited, unsought!—what royal condescension!—and to have to carry back to Windsor a refusal. It seemed to him incredible. Miss Burney had been marked out, he told her, with such favour by the Queen, as a person with whom she had been so singularly pleased. He pleaded with her, almost tearfully. And the material advantages! Her Majesty proposed giving Miss Burney apartments in the Palace; making her belong to the table of Mrs. Schwellenberg, her Mistress of the Robes, with whom all her own visitors—bishops, lords, or commons—always dined; keeping her a footman; and settling on her £200 a year. What could she not do in such a position for her friends, and especially for her father?

Miss Burney grew more and more dejected. The attendance upon the Princess was to be incessant, the confinement to the Court continual, which meant that she would be almost entirely cut off from her many friends, to whom she was devoted. She would not accept the offer; yet did not like to offend by definitely declining. Royalty, like humbler mortals, when it confers a favour, does not like to be baulked of its good intentions. Mr. Smelt, a sad man, went to Windsor, and in a few days returned with the information that her Majesty would receive Miss Burney next week at the Castle. The poor lady's spirits drooped yet lower.

"I now see the end—I see it next to inevitable," she wailed in a letter to Miss Cambridge. "I can suggest nothing upon earth that I dare say for myself, in an audience so generously meant. I cannot even to my father utter my reluctance—I see him so delighted at the

prospect of my establishment he looks upon as so honourable. But for the Queen's own word *permanent*—but for her declared desire to attach me entirely to herself and family—I should share in his pleasure; but what can make me amends for all I shall forfeit? But I must do the best I can. Write me a comforting and strengthening letter, my dearest Miss Cambridge. I have no heart to write to Mickleham, or Norbury. I know how they will grieve: they have expected me to spend the whole summer with them. My greatest terror is, lest the Queen, from what Mr. Smelt hinted, should make me promise myself to her for a length of years. What can I do to avoid that? Anything that has a period is endurable; but what can I object that will not sound ungrateful to the honour she is doing me, and meaning me? She has given the most highly flattering reasons for making this application, in preference to listening to that of others; she has put it upon terms of commendation the most soothing; she is, indeed, one of the sweetest characters in the world. Will you, too, condemn me, that I feel thus oppressed by her proposal? I hope not—I think not; but be very honest if you really do. I wish I could see you! It is not from nervousness; I have always and uniformly had a horror of a life of attendance and dependence."

The humour was not apparent to Miss Burney. Here was she crying out, "Could I but save myself from a lasting bond, from a promised devotion!" Here was the Queen, who, determined to have her, told her, "I am sure we shall suit one another very well," and, "I am sure we shall do very well together." It was all taken for granted. "And what is it, dear sir, you suppose to be my business?" she wrote to her father after the interview. "Not to attend any of the Princesses—but the Queen

herself! This, indeed, was a delightful hearing, reverencing and admiring her as I have so sincerely done ever since I first saw her. And in this my amazement is proportioned to my satisfaction; for the place designed me is that of Mrs. Haggerdorn, who came with her from Germany, and it will put me more immediately and more constantly in her presence than any other place but that of Mrs. Schwellenberg in the Court.

"The prepossession taken in my favour is truly extraordinary, for it seems as if her real view was, as Mr. Smelt hinted, to attach me to her person. She has been long, she told Mrs. Delany, looking out for one to supply the place of Mrs. Haggerdorn, whose ill-health forces her back to Germany, 'and I was led to think of Miss Burney first, by her books; then, by seeing her; then, by always hearing how she was loved by her friends; but, chiefly, by your friendship for her.'"

Those in the know congratulated Miss Burney heartily, but the announcement was not yet made. "You may believe how much I am busied," she wrote to Mrs. Frances. "I have been presented at the Queen's Lodge in Windsor, and seen Mrs. Haggerdorn in office, and find I have a place of really nothing to do, but to *attend*; and on Thursday I am appointed by her Majesty to go to St. James's, to see all that belongs to me there. And I am now *fitting out* just as you were, and all the maids and workers suppose I am going to be married, and snigger every time they bring in any of my new attire. I do not care to publish the affair till it is made known by authority; so I leave them to their conjectures, and I fancy their greatest wonder is *who* and *where* is the *sposo*, for they must think it odd he should never appear!" The die was cast, and she took up her duties at Court on July 17, 1786.

It is amusing to recall that, six months before the Queen's offer was made to her, Miss Burney had drawn up the following humorous "Directions for coughing, sneezing, or moving before the King and Queen."

"In the first place, you must not cough. If you find a cough tickling in your throat, you must arrest it from making any sound; if you find yourself choking with the forbearance, you must choke—but not cough.

"In the second place, you must not sneeze. If you have a vehement cold, you must take no notice of it; if your nose-membranes feel a great irritation, you must hold your breath; if a sneeze still insists upon making its way, you must oppose it, by keeping your teeth grinding together; if the violence of the repulse breaks some blood-vessel, you must break the blood-vessel—but not sneeze.

"In the third place, you must not, upon any account, stir either hand or foot. If, by chance, a black pin runs into your head, you must not take it out. If the pain is very great, you must be sure to bear it without wincing; if it brings the tears into your eyes, you must not wipe them off; if they give you a tingling by running down your cheeks, you must look as if nothing was the matter. If the blood should gush from your head by means of the black pin, you must let it gush; if you are uneasy to think of making such a blurred appearance, you must be uneasy, but you must say nothing about it. If, however, the agony is very great, you may, privately, bite the inside of your cheek, or of your lips, for a little relief; taking care, meanwhile, to do it so cautiously as to make no apparent dent outwardly. And with that precaution, if even you gnaw a piece out, it will not be minded, only be sure to

swallow it, or commit it to a corner of the inside of your mouth till they are gone—for you must not spit."

The author of these " Directions " now found herself a courtier !

Why did Miss Burney accept the appointment? Macaulay thought that it was that she could not contend against the act of kindness of their Majesties. " But their kindness was the kindness of persons raised high above the mass of mankind," he said, " accustomed to be addressed with profound deference, accustomed to see all who approached them mortified by their coldness and elated by their smiles. They fancied that to be noticed by them, to serve them, was in itself a kind of happiness ; and that Frances Burney ought to be full of gratitude for being permitted to purchase, by the surrender of health, wealth, freedom, domestic differences, and literary fame, the privilege of standing behind a royal chair and holding a pair of royal gloves."

Macaulay blamed Dr. Burney, whom he thought had brought pressure to bear upon his daughter to accept, and, one way and another, a good deal of pity has been expended on the lady. Yet it must be remembered that Miss Burney was no unsophisticated girl going out for the first time in the world. She was in her thirty-fifth year ; she had many very dear friends ; and she was not urged by poverty to take the post. May it not have been awe of Royalty that was the deciding factor ?

For more than four years Miss Burney remained at Court as second dresser to the Queen, and a very unhappy time it was for her. In spite of the high-sounding title of her post, her duties were almost menial. She had to get up early to attend the Queen's toilette, and she perforce went to bed late. She dined with Madam Schwellenberg, who hated her, and, so far as it lay in her power, made her

life a misery. She was almost completely cut off from her friends, and her only pleasures were in her correspondence and her diary. Miss Burney put up with much tyranny and bad temper from Madam Schwellenberg, but, when too much goaded, she could hold her own, as the following incident shows.

" Mrs. Schwellenberg said, ' I might tell you noe, the Queen is going to Oxford, and you might go with her ; it is a secret—you might not tell it anybody. But I tell you once, I shall do for you what I can ; you are to have a gown.'

" I started, and drew back, with a look so undisguised of wonder and displeasure at this extraordinary speech that I saw it was understood, and she then thought it time therefore, to name her authority, which, with great emphasis, she did thus : ' The Queen will give you a gown ! The Queen says you are not rich,' etc.

" There was something in the manner of this quite intolerable to me ; and I hastily interrupted her with saying, ' I have two new gowns by me, and therefore do not require another.'

" Perhaps a proposed present from her Majesty was never so received before ; but the grossness of the manner of the messenger swallowed up the graciousness of the design in the principal, and I had not even a wish to conceal how little it was to my taste.

" The highest surprise sat upon her brow : she had imagined that a gown—that any present—would have been caught at with obsequious avidity ; but indeed she was mistaken.

" Seeing the wonder and displeasure now hers, I calmly added, ' The Queen is very good, and I am sensible of her Majesty's graciousness, but there is not, in this instance, the least occasion for it.'

"'Miss Bernar,' cried she quite angrily, 'I tell you once, when the Queen give you a gown, you must be humble, thankful, when you are the Duchess of Ancaster!'

"She then enumerated various ladies to whom her Majesty had made the same present, many of them of the first distinction, and all, she said, great secrets. Still I only repeated again the same speech.

"I can bear to be checked and curbed in discourse, and would rather be subdued into silence—and even, if that proves a gratification that secures peace and gives pleasure, into apparent insensibility; but to receive a favour through the vehicle of insolent ostentation—no! no! To submit to ill-humour rather than argue and dispute I think an exercise of patience, and I encourage myself all I can to practise it: but to accept even a shadow of an obligation upon such terms I should think mean and unworthy, and therefore I mean always, in a Court as I would elsewhere, to be open and fearless in declining such subjection.

"When she had finished her list of secret ladies, I told her I must beg to speak to the Queen, and make my own acknowledgments for her gracious intention."

As regards this appointment, there was much sense in the remarks of a Bishop's wife, "Well, the Queen, to be sure, is a great deal better dressed than she used to be; but, for all that, I really think, it is but an odd thing for you! Dear! I think it's something so out of the way for you! I can't think how you set about it. It must have been very droll to you at first," she said. "A great deal of honour, to be sure, to serve a Queen, and all that; but I dare say a lady's-maid could do it better; though to be called a Queen, as I say, is a great deal of honour: but, for my part, I should not like it, because to be always

obliged to go to a person, whether one was in the humour or not, and to get up in the morning, if one was never so sleepy !—dear ! it must be a mighty hurry-skurry life ! You don't look at all fit for it, to judge by appearances, for all its great honour, and all that."

It was, however, the Schwellenberg who was the greatest cross that Miss Burney had to put up with. " How you bear it," cried Mdlle. Montmollin to her, " living with Mrs. Schwellenberg ! I like it better living in prison !—'pon *m'honneur*, I prefer it bread and water ; I think her so cross never was. If I you, I won't bear it—poor Miss Burney !—I so sorry !—'pon *m'honneur*, I think to you oftens !—you so confined, you won't have no pleasures ! " Matters became so strained between Miss Burney and the Mistress of the Robes that the former made up her mind to get away from the Court so soon as it was possible to do so without giving offence—no easy thing to avoid.

Miss Burney in the first place took up the matter of her retirement with her father, who discussed it in all calmness and good temper. " I spoke my high and constant veneration for my Royal Mistress, her merits, her virtues, her condescension, and her even peculiar kindness towards me," she reported the conversation which took place in May 1790. " But I owned the species of life distasteful to me ; I was lost to all private comfort, dead to all domestic endearment ; I was worn with want of rest, and fatigued with laborious watchfulness and attendance. My time was devoted to official duties ; and all that in life was dearest to me—my friends, my choosed society, my best affections—lived now in my mind only by recollection, and rested upon that with nothing but bitter regret. With relations the most deservedly dear, with friends of almost unequalled goodness, I lived like

an orphan—like one who had no natural ties, and must make her way as she could by those that were factitious. Melancholy was the existence where happiness was excluded, though not a complaint could be made! where the illustrious personages who were served possessed almost all human excellence—yet where those who were their servants, though treated with the most benevolent condescension, could never, in any part of the live-long day, command liberty, or social intercourse, or repose!"

In December Miss Burney's health was giving way. Everybody was very kind and considerate to her, but she decided that she must retire without further delay. It was a difficult business. The Queen could not understand anyone wishing, for any reason whatsoever, to leave her service; she spoke of a short holiday, and so on. She would not at once accept the resignation, and Miss Burney would not press it. When at last the Queen, at the beginning of 1791, did accept the resignation, she took no steps to arrange for a successor, and it was not until Miss Burney showed that she was determined to leave the Court that her Majesty yielded the point.

"I come now to write the last week of my royal residence," so runs a passage in the *Diary*. "The Queen honoured me with the most uniform graciousness, and though as the time of separation approached her cordiality rather diminished, and traces of internal displeasure appeared sometimes, arising from an opinion I ought rather to have struggled on, live or die, than to quit her—yet I am sure she saw how poor was my own chance, except by a change in the mode of life, and at least ceased to wonder, though she could not approve." Miss Burney left the Court on July 7, 1791, having lived in the Royal service for five years. A pension of one hundred pounds a year was settled on her.

Miss Burney was again her own mistress, and very happy to be again with her father at Chelsea College, where he was organist. Her state of health was still so indifferent that she could not pay many visits. However, her many friends came to see her, and made her feel again that life was worth living. At the end of the year she went to recuperate at the seaside, and then she was able to stay with her relations and friends.

When she was staying with her friends, the Lockes, at Mickleham in the autumn of 1792, among the French *emigrés* who came there was M. d'Arblay. Miss Burney described him as "tall, and a good figure, with an open and manly countenance, about forty I imagine." She was from the first attracted by him. "The adjutant of M. Lafayette, and one of those who proved faithful to that excellent general, could not but be interesting to me. I was extremely pleased at his coming, and more and more pleased with himself every moment that passed," she wrote in her Diary a few days after his arrival in England. "He seems to me a true *militaire, franc et loyal*—open as the day—warmly affectionate to his friends—intelligent, ready, and amusing in conversation, with a great share of *gaiété de cœur*, and, at the same time, of *naïveté* and *bonne foi*."

The liking she had for him soon changed to a warmer feeling, and she thought him one of the most delightful characters she had ever met. "He has a sincerity, a frankness, an ingenuous openness of nature, that I had been unjust enough to think could not belong to a Frenchman," she wrote. "With all this, which is his military portion, he is passionately fond of literature, a most delicate critic in his own language, well versed in both Italian and German, and a very elegant poet. He has just undertaken to become my French master for

pronunciation, and he gives me long daily lessons in reading. Pray expect wonderful improvements! In return, I hear him in English, and for his theme this evening he has been writing an English address *à Mr. Burney* (i.e., M. le Docteur), joining in Madame de Staël's request."

There is no need to tell the story of the courtship. In May 1793 Miss Burney announced to her father the fact that she had engaged herself to d'Arblay. Dr. Burney was greatly troubled. One of the points he made was that the soldier had not a penny in the world, his estates in France having been confiscated, and that his daughter only had the pension of £100 a year, even that being only during the royal pleasure. At last, however, Dr. Burney gave way, and the marriage was celebrated on July 31 in Mickleham Church.

"You may be amazed not to see the name of my dear father upon this solemn occasion; but his apprehensions from the smallness of our income have made him cold and averse; and, though he granted his consent, I could not even solicit his presence," she said in one of the first letters she wrote as a wife. "I feel satisfied, however, that time will convince him I have not been so imprudent as he now thinks me. Happiness is the great end of all our worldly views and proceedings, and no one can judge for another in what will produce it. To me, wealth and ambition would always be unavailing; I have lived in their most centrical possessions, and I have always seen that the happiness of the richest and the greatest has been the moment of retiring from riches and from power. Domestic comfort and social affection have invariably been the sole as well as ultimate objects of my choice, and I have always been a stranger to any other species of felicity. M. d'Arblay has a taste for literature, and a

passion for reading and writing, as marked as my own ; this is a sympathy to rob retirement of all superfluous leisure, and insure to us both occupation, constantly edifying or entertaining. He has seen so much of life, and has suffered so severely from its disappointments, that retreat, with a chosen companion, is become his final desire."

The d'Arblays lived perforce in a very modest way at the little village of Bookham, near Norbury, and to them was born a son, Alexander. Mme. d'Arblay, in the hope of increasing the family income, now finished a tragedy, *Edwy and Elvine*, to the composition of which she had devoted some of her scanty leisure at Windsor. It was produced at Drury Lane in March 1795, but, even with Mrs. Siddons and John Philip Kemble in the cast, it ran for only one night, and consequently made no money for anyone concerned.

Far more successful from the financial point of view was Mme. d'Arblay's *Camilla*, which she published the year after her dramatic failure. Her friends rallied round her, and by every means in their power secured subscriptions for copies. A body of society ladies took copies themselves, and " touted " the book among their acquaintances. The results of this kindly action was to enable the author to build a small cottage on a plot of land at West Hamble, near Mickleham, which was presented to her by her dear friends, the Lockes. In this abode they remained for some years. In 1801, however, d'Arblay went to Paris in search of employment, and during the following year his wife joined him.

The advent of the Regency found them still abroad, staying at Passy, but Mme. d'Arblay, at least, anxious to return to her own country for a while. In 1812 she came back with her son, to put him to school. She found her

father, now in his eighty-sixth year, in a very feeble state of health, living in almost complete retirement. In the circumstances, she, knowing that the end could not be far off, could not bring herself to leave him, and she stayed with him until he passed away two years later. It was at the beginning of 1814 that she published her last novel, *The Wanderers*, which secured for her a very considerable sum of money. She rejoined her husband in France, but when, after Waterloo, he was placed on the retired list, they came back to England.

" Our journey was eventless, yet sad ; sad, not solely, though chiefly, from the continued sufferings of my wounded companion, but sad, also, that I quitted so many dear friends, who had wrought themselves by innumerable kindnesses into my affection, and who knew not, for we could not bring ourselves to utter words that must have reciprocated so much pain that our intended future residence was England," she noted in the *Diary*. " The most tender and generous of fathers had taken this difficult resolution for the sake of his son, whose earnest wish had been repeatedly expressed for permission to establish himself in the land of his birth. That my wishes led to the same point there could be no doubt, and powerfully did they weigh with the most disinterested and most indulgent of husbands. All that could be suggested to compromise what was jarring in our feelings, so as to save all parties from murmuring or regret, was the plan of a yearly journey to France."

D'Arblay died in 1818, his wife surviving him by more than a score of years, by which time she had outlived nearly all her old friends. She had, however, her son, to whom she was devoted, but who gave her some anxiety. " We have had our Alexander for six weeks ; he left us three days ago, and I won't tell my dear friend whether

or not we miss him," she had written to Mrs. Locke in 1816. " He is precisely such as he was—as inartificial in his character, as irregular in his studies. He cannot bring himself to conquer his disgust of the routine of labour at Cambridge, and while he energetically argues upon the innocence of a preference to his own early practice,[1] which he vindicates, I believe unanswerably, with regard to its real superiority, he is insensible, at least forgetful, of all that can be urged of the mischiefs to his prospects in life that must result from his not conquering his inclinations. I have nearly lost all hope of his taking the high degree adjudged to him by general expectation at the University, from the promise of his opening."

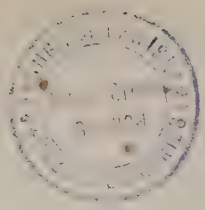
However, it might have been worse. He was tenth Wrangler in 1818, in which year he took holy orders. He was nominated Minister of Ely Chapel in 1836, but he passed away a few months later. " On the opening of this most mournful, most *earthly* hopeless, of any and of all the years yet commenced of my long career," she wrote in a private note-book. " Yet, humbly I bless my God and Saviour, not hopeless ; but full of gently-beaming hopes, countless and fraught with aspirations of the time that may succeed to the dread infliction of this last irreparable privation, and bereavement of my darling, loved, and most touchingly loving, dear, soul-dear, Alex."

There is a brief account of Madame d'Arblay in her old age by Sir Walter Scott, who was taken to her in 1826 by Samuel Rogers. " I have been introduced," he wrote, " to Madame d'Arblay, the celebrated authoress of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*—an elderly lady with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, and pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently

[1] He had studied mathematics in Paris according to the analytical method, instead of the geometrical, which was at that time exclusively taught at Cambridge.

quick feeling. She told me she had wished to see two persons—myself, of course, being one, the other George Canning. This was really a compliment to be pleased with—a nice little pat of butter made up by a neat-handed Phillis of a dairy-maid, instead of the grease fit only for cart-wheels which one is dosed with by the pound. I trust I shall see this lady again."

Madame d'Arblay's last literary work was to edit in 1832 the *Memoirs* of her father, who is still well remembered by his *History of Music*. Her own *Diary* was published posthumously, and has taken its place as one of the most interesting works of its kind. It has had the high distinction of being edited by Austin Dobson.



CHAPTER IV

MRS. FITZHERBERT (1756–1837)

The Prince of Wales as amorist—His early love-affairs—Lady Sarah Campbell—The beautiful Harriet Vernon—His intrigue with Mary Robinson—Mrs. Robinson's early life—She plays Perdita at Drury Lane—Attracts the attention of the Prince—He falls in love with her—She becomes his mistress—He tires of her—A final meeting—She threatens to publish the Prince's letters—The King buys the correspondence—Mrs. Fitzherbert—Her two marriages—The Prince fascinated by her—She falls in love with him—But will not enter into a liaison—A conspiracy against her honour fails—She goes abroad—The Prince in despair—He marries her secretly—The marriage denied in Parliament—Her indignation—A favourite with society—At Brighton—Maria Anne Crouch—Mrs. Fitzherbert entertains in Pall Mall—The Regency Bill—Lady Jersey a successful rival—Mrs. Fitzherbert goes abroad.

THE Prince of Wales was, beyond question, an ardent amorist all the days of his life, and his happiest hours were those spent in the company of women. The story of his early amours need not be given in detail. They were merely of passing interest, but, of course, they attracted a good deal of attention at the time. "Much do I lament to add that some of those about the young Princes swerved from principle, and introduced improper company when their Majesties supposed them to be at rest, and after the divines had closed their day with prayer." Thus wrote Mrs. Papendieck, a lady in the Household of Queen Charlotte, who added that General Lake and Colonel Hulse, who were in attendance on the Prince of Wales and his brother, having an eye to the future, overlooked the irregularities of their charges.

It is said that the Prince of Wales had an intrigue with the wife of one of General Lake's grooms, who has been described as "a tall, slim person, with rather a pretty

face and dark eyes, but a great slattern, and more low and vulgar than that class of person usually are." When he was nineteen he lost his heart to Lady Sarah Campbell, but she just laughed at him ; whereupon he transferred his affections to the beautiful Harriet Vernon, who in 1782 was appointed a Maid of Honour to his mother.

His first *grande passion* of which there is any record was for Mary Robinson, the actress. Mrs. Robinson was born in 1758, and so was four years older than his Royal Highness, who was seventeen when he first saw her. Mrs. Robinson, *née* Darby, was the daughter of the captain of a Bristol whaler, and she received a decent education. She was able to write poems, and later to compose her own *Recollections*. She was a very pretty girl, and when it became necessary for her to earn her own living her thoughts turned to the stage. At Oxford House, Marylebone, which was her "finishing school," the dancing-master was Hussey, who was also ballet-master at Covent Garden Theatre. He interested himself in the girl, and made her known to Arthur Murphy, the actor and dramatist, and to others likely to further her desire to go on the stage. Her gift for recitation so much impressed Thomas Hall, one of the managers of Covent Garden, that he introduced her to David Garrick. He even, at least, so the lady says, offered to let her make her first appearance as Cordelia to his Lear.

Her début, however, was postponed—it looked as if it might be indefinitely—for when she was in her sixteenth year she married Thomas Robinson, who had been at Harrow at the same time as Sheridan, and was then serving as clerk to an attorney. Robinson, who had a passion for genteel society, soon ran through what small means he had, and presently found himself, with his wife and daughter, in a debtor's prison. Mrs. Robinson now

collected her poems, and in 1775, through the good offices of the Duchess of Devonshire, contrived to find a publisher for the little volume of verses. But not even in the eighteenth century would a couple of volumes of verses keep a mother and child, and so her thoughts reverted to the stage. Garrick, though on the eve of his retirement, again interested himself in her, and soon after he left the stage she, through the help of Sheridan, secured a lucrative engagement at Drury Lane.

She made her first appearance in December 1776 as Juliet, and during the next few years played many leading parts. Her beauty attracted many men-about-town, and, as an actress in those days was regarded as fair game, she received much attention. "I was addressed with proposals of a libertine nature by a *royal* duke, a *lofty* marquis, and a city merchant of considerable fortune, conveyed through the medium of milliners, mantua makers, etc., etc.," she has recorded. Robinson apparently was entirely unconcerned as to her mode of life, so long as she kept him in funds. There is her own authority for the fact that she rejected scornfully all overtures, even those of the "*royal* duke." It remained for the Heir-Apparent to overcome her scruples.

On December 3, 1779, Mrs. Robinson played Perdita in Garrick's version of *A Winter's Tale*, at Drury Lane. "I hurried through the first scene, not without embarrassment, owing to the fixed attention with which the Prince of Wales honoured me. Indeed, some flattering remarks which were made by His Royal Highness met my ear as I stood near his box, and I was overwhelmed with confusion," so runs the lady's account of this memorable evening. "The Prince's particular attention was observed by everyone. . . . On the last courtsey, the royal family condescendingly returned a bow to the

performers, but just as the curtain was falling my eyes met those of the Prince of Wales, and *with a look I shall never forget*, he gently inclined his head a second time. I felt the compliment, and blushed my gratitude. . . . On my return home, I had a party to supper, and the whole conversation centred in encomiums on the person, graces, amiable manners of the illustrious Heir-Apparent."

This was only the beginning. The Prince followed up the advantage which the favourable impression he had made gave him. Lord Malden (afterwards fifth Earl of Essex) called on Mrs. Robinson, and presented her with a note, containing " only a few words, but these expressive of more than common civility." The *billet* was addressed to " Perdita," and signed " Florizel."

This was the beginning of a correspondence, but it was some months before a meeting was arranged. It was not easy to fix a rendezvous, but at last they forgathered one evening in the moonlight on the banks of the Thames opposite Kew Palace. For a little the lady was obdurate —but not for too long. " The graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene shall be forgotten," wrote Mrs. Robinson. For some time the lovers met clandestinely ; but when, in 1781, the Prince was given an establishment at Buckingham House they went about publicly. Then " Florizel " grew tired of " Perdita," and she was given her *congé* by letter. " Only two days previous to this letter being written I had seen the Prince at Kew," moaned the lady in her *Memoirs*, " and his affection appeared to be as boundless as it was undiminished."

" Perdita " Robinson did not take her dismissal without

protest ; she insisted upon a final intercourse, and, after many rebuffs, this was granted, and there was much affectionate conversation. Mrs. Robinson's sun seemed still, therefore, to be shining brightly. The very next day, however, His Royal Highness passed the lady without giving any sign of recognition. But the end was not yet. In the first flush of his ardour the Prince had given the actress a bond for twenty thousand pounds. She had, not unnaturally, been living expensively, and had incurred debts to a very considerable amount. The Prince would not, in fact, he could not, honour his bond, and Mrs. Robinson now expressed her intention to publish His Royal Highness's letters. The King heard of the threat—it does not appear he knew of the bond—and eventually, through the good offices of Lieutenant-Colonel Hotham, bought the letters for five thousand pounds.

Charles James Fox arranged that the bond should be cancelled in consideration of an official pension of five hundred pounds a year, one half of which should be continued to Mrs. Robinson's daughter for life, in consideration of the " resignation of a lucrative profession at the particular request of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." As a reward for interesting himself in this matter, Mrs. Robinson for some time lived with Fox. There the story, so far as His Royal Highness is concerned, comes to an end.

In this particular case, perhaps, the Prince of Wales was not to blame. A boy of seventeen may well be attracted by a pretty actress four years his senior, and, while it cannot be suggested that he was innocent at this early age, there is, on the other hand, no doubt whatever that the lady knew her way about very well indeed.

The affair with Mary Robinson may be dismissed as a

youthful indiscretion of the Prince of Wales. His passion for Mrs. Fitzherbert was quite another matter. Mrs. Robinson was a young woman whose reputation was regarded, rightly or wrongly, as indifferent; Mrs. Fitzherbert was above suspicion in any and every way. In fact, the only point of resemblance between them was that each was older than His Royal Highness, Mrs. Fitzherbert, by six years, and Mrs. Robinson by four years.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, *née* Maria Anne Smythe, was the daughter of a well-known Roman Catholic family—the question of her religion bulks largely in the story of her life. When she was eighteen years of age, in 1773, she married Edmund Weld, of Lutworth Castle, Dorsetshire; and, he dying from the result of a fall while riding a few months later, she, in 1778, became the wife of Thomas Fitzherbert, of Swynnerton, Staffordshire, and of Norbury, Derbyshire. This marriage also came to an untimely end. Fitzherbert, however, had made ample provision for her, leaving her his house in Park Lane and an income of two thousand a year.

For some time after the death of her second husband she lived in retirement, but in 1784 she came to her town house and became a prominent figure in London society. "A new constellation has lately made an appearance in the fashionable hemisphere that engages the attention of those whose hearts are susceptible to the power of beauty," so runs a paragraph in the *Morning Herald* of March 20 of that year. "The widow of the late Mr. F–h–t has in her train half our young nobility; as the lady has not as yet discovered a partiality for any of her admirers, they are all animated with hopes of success."

A contemporary described her as "not very beautiful,

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After John Russell, R.A.

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nor especially witty, but with great sweetness of disposition, much good sense, charming manners, and a fascination." A later writer says, "Her wealth of golden hair was unpowdered, the warm pallor of her cheeks was unrouged, her lustrous eyes were also innocent of art, and her sunny smile was guileless. She had not yet developed the aquiline nose that came in later years, and the curves of her beautiful figure were not yet marred by being too round." The portraits by George Cosway, Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Romney all pay tribute to her attractive appearance.

The Prince of Wales saw her, and was conquered. Where he first saw her is a matter of argument between her biographers. One has it that it was at Richmond during her second widowhood, when he was staying at Kew Palace; another, that he caught his first glimpse of her in Lady Sheffield's box at the opera. It is immaterial. Anyhow, when he did meet her, he made it very obvious that she attracted him vastly. Whenever it was possible for him to go where she went, he went. His attentions may not actually have compromised her, but they certainly caused her to be talked about.

That Mrs. Fitzherbert was a virtuous woman has never been doubted, but that in this case she behaved foolishly is not to be disputed. A woman of good family, and twice a wife, she must be assumed to have acquired some knowledge of the world. She must have known that the devotion of the Prince of Wales must result in scandal, Yet, beyond question, she encouraged him. Probably, indeed, almost certainly, she liked to have the Heir-Apparent in her train. It was a very obvious tribute to her charm, and charming women, like others who have little claim to that quality, like admiration from those in high places. Of course she was no demi-rep, or

unsophisticated girl, to yield herself to his advances. She simply enjoyed the game. That would have been well enough, but, while she was playing, she lost her heart to her youthful admirer—which was far from well. Still keeping her head, she began to consider the advisability of going abroad for a spell, and, presently, as the Prince became more importunate, she nearly made up her mind to do so.

His Royal Highness, to do him justice, was heartily in love. When Mrs. Fitzherbert treated his protestations as gallantry he was in despair. She would not be his mistress, and he could not marry her, a non-royal lady.

It is a fact that the Duke of Gloucester, the brother of George III, had married in 1772 the widow of the Earl of Waldegrave, and that the Duke of Cumberland had taken as his wife the widow of Colonel Horton, but that was before the Royal Marriage Act, which, indeed, arose directly out of these alliances. By this Act none of the descendants of George II, unless of foreign birth, can marry under the age of twenty-five without the consent of the King; at and after that age, after twelve months' notice given to the Privy Council, they may contract such marriage, which shall be good unless both Houses of Parliament disapprove.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was content not to become in law Princess of Wales, but she was a devout follower of her religion, and nothing at this time would satisfy her but that she and the Prince should go through a ceremony of marriage that would justify her in the eyes of her Church.

To this His Royal Highness would have gladly consented, but that his legal adviser, Sir Arthur Pigott, was of opinion that this ceremony, in spite of the fact that

Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic, would constitute a valid union. Sir Arthur Pigott would appear, however, to have been wrong, for the marriage of the Duke of Sussex with Lady Augusta Murray, which was solemnised in 1793, was pronounced illegal in the following year, and the claim of their son, Sir Augustus d'Este, was declared by the House of Lords fifty years later to be invalid. A still more disturbing factor was put before the Prince: that, as Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic, he, if he married her, would by the provision of the Act of Settlement be disqualified for succession to the throne.

For such a sacrifice the ardent lover was not prepared.

What fair play could not bring about the Prince, according to Lord Stourton, endeavoured to obtain by foul. "For some time Mrs. Fitzherbert's resistance had been availing," he has recorded; "but she was about to meet with a species of attack so unprecedented and alarming as to shake her resolution, and to force her to take that first step which afterwards led by slow (but on the part of the Prince successful) advances to that union which he so ardently desired, and to obtain which he was ready to risk such personal sacrifice. Keit, the surgeon, Lord Onslow, Lord Southampton, and Mr. Edward Bouverie arrived at her house in the utmost consternation, informing her that the life of the Prince was in imminent danger, that he had stabbed himself, and that only her immediate presence would save him. She resented, in the most peremptory manner, all their importunities, saying that nothing should induce her to enter Carlton House.

"She was afterwards brought to share in the alarm, but, still fearful of some stratagem derogatory to her reputation, insisted upon some lady of high character

accompanying her as an indispensable condition; the Duchess of Devonshire was selected. The four drove from Park Street to Devonshire House, and took her along with them. She found the Prince pale and covered with blood. The sight so overpowered her faculties that she was deprived almost of all consciousness. The Prince told her that nothing would induce him to live unless she promised to become his wife, and permitted him to put a ring round her finger. I believe a ring from the hand of the Duchess of Devonshire was used upon the occasion, and not one of his own. . . . They returned to Devonshire House. A deposition was drawn up of what had occurred, and signed and sealed by each one of the party; and, for all she knew to the contrary, might still be there."

Mrs. Fitzherbert, who always insisted, curiously enough—since who else scored?—that the Prince was innocent of any share in the conspiracy, yet came to the conclusion that there had been treachery somewhere, and protested in writing to Lord Southampton that she had not been a free agent, and withdrew her consent.

Thereupon the twice-widowed buxom lady of twenty-seven sought safety in flight from her youthful admirer, and went abroad.

The Prince apparently behaved like a madman. He went down to St. Anne's, Chertsey, and poured out his woes to Mrs. Armistead, then living with Charles James Fox, whom she later married, and, she told Lord Holland that "he cried by the hour, that he testified to the sincerity and violence of his passion and his despair by the most extravagant expressions and actions, rolling on the floor, striking his forehead, tearing his hair, falling into hysterics, and swearing he would abandon

the country, forgo the crown, sell his jewels, and scrape together a competency, to fly with the object of his adoration to America."

Mrs. Fitzherbert's movements could not long be kept a secret from the Prince. He bombarded her with appeals to return; he declared that he would come to her—but the ardent lad had to abandon this idea because the King forbade it. He offered her marriage. Mrs. Fitzherbert, no doubt remembering the absurd scene at Carlton House, hesitated, or, it may be, hesitated to believe he was sincere. Yet presently, as her first biographer put it, "wrought upon and fearful, she was induced to promise formally and deliberately that she would never marry any other person." Thereupon his Royal Highness was incited to persevere, and in the end the lady returned to London in December 1785 as his fiancée.

It is difficult to appraise her motives. Why, in the name of all that was wonderful, should she have made all this bother, refusal after refusal, flight, further refusals, if in the end she promised not to marry another, and then —capitulated? The late W. H. Wilkins, in his biography of this distressed lady, endeavoured to explain. "Her motives were not interested," he says. "Perhaps she persuaded herself that she must make the sacrifice for his sake, perhaps she deluded herself that she was necessary to him—this headstrong, passionate, lovable youth, whose faults appeared to be all on the surface, and who was his own worst enemy. Perhaps she conceived it was her mission to rescue him from his evil advisers, and make him worthy of the high position which he was one day to fill.

"It may be, too, that her heart now spoke for the first time. She had been married twice before to men years older than herself, and these marriages were probably,

arranged for her by others. The union she now contemplated was not a marriage of convenience, but of pure romance. There were in this adventure all the elements of romance, of secrecy, of danger. A prince, young and handsome as an Apollo, a lover, passionate and ardent, laid his heart at her feet. She would have been less than a woman had she spurned it. She was weary of her self-imposed exile, weary of the loneliness of her life. There had come to her that hunger that comes sooner or later to every man and woman, the desire to take happiness with both hands, and count the world well lost—the desire to know, even if it be for one brief hour, the heart of life. And this it may be claimed for Maria Fitzherbert: that, despite all the sufferings and disappointment of after-years, she at least had her hour.

"Thus, it follows that, after all, the simplest explanation of her yielding is the truest. She yielded because she loved him."

Shall we let it go at that, without even a thought that the position of wife of the Heir-Apparent may have appealed to the vanity of any woman? The weariness of her self-imposed exile need not be unduly stressed, for it was not of long endurance.

The marriage of an Heir-Apparent is not a mere personal matter, it is also, and primarily, an Affair of State. That His Royal Highness clearly realised this is made evident enough by the fact that he did not mention his intention to his friend and adviser, Charles James Fox. Fox, however, heard the rumour of what was perpending, and it is not putting it too strongly to say that he was horrified. In a lengthy and well-reasoned letter he appealed to the Prince to pause and consider the position in which he would be placed. "I

was told just before I left town yesterday that Mrs. Fitzherbert was arrived, and if I had heard only this I should have felt more unfeigned joy at an event which I knew would contribute so much to your Royal Highness's satisfaction ; but I was told at the same time that, from a variety of circumstances which had been observed and put together, there was reason to suppose that you were going to take the very desperate step, pardon the expression, of marrying her at this moment," he wrote on December 10, 1765.

He went on to point out, in the first instance, a marriage with a Catholic throws the prince contracting such a marriage out of succession to the throne. " If there be a doubt about Mrs. Fitzherbert's previous conversion," he said, "consider the circumstances in which you stand : the King not feeling for you as a father ought ; the Duke of York, professedly his favourite, and likely to be married to the King's wishes ; the nation full of its old prejudices against Catholics, and justly dreading all disputes about succession."

Fox regarded the issue as so dangerous that he could not reconcile it with his conscience not to mince matters ; and he put clearly the consequences that might very easily arise. " I have stated this danger upon the supposition that the marriage could be a real one, but your Royal Highness knows as well as I that according to the present laws of the country it cannot, and I need not point out to your good sense what a source of uneasiness it must be to you, to her, and above all to the nation, to have it a matter of dispute and discussion whether the Prince of Wales is or is not married. If there should be children from the marriage, I need not say how much the uneasiness as well of yourselves as of the nation must be aggravated. If anything could

add to the weight of the consideration, it is the impossibility of remedying the mischief I have alluded to. For if your Royal Highness should think proper, when you are twenty-five years old, to notify Parliament your intention to marry (by which means alone a legal marriage can be contracted), in what manner can it be notified? If the previous marriage is mentioned or owned, will it not be said that you have set at defiance the laws of your country, and that you now come to Parliament for a sanction to what you have already done in contempt of it? If there are children, will it not be said we must look for future applications to legitimate them, and consequently be liable to dispute for the succession between the eldest son and the eldest son *after* the legal marriage? And will not the entire annulling of the whole marriage be suggested as the most secure way of preventing all such disputes? If the marriage is not mentioned to Parliament, but yet is known to have been solemnised, as it certainly will be known if it takes place, these are the consequences: first, that at all events any child born in the interim is immediately illegitimated; and, next, that arguments will be drawn from the circumstances of the cancelled marriage against the public one. It will be said that a woman who has lived with you as your wife without being so is not fit to be Queen of England; and then the very thing that is done for her reputation will be used against it; and what would make this worse would be the marriage being known (though not officially communicated to Parliament)—it would be impossible to deny the assertion; whereas, if *there were no marriage*, I conclude your intercourse would be carried on as it ought, in so private a way as to make it wholly inconsistent with decency or propriety for anyone in public to hazard such a suggestion. If, in consequence of your

notification, steps should be taken in Parliament, and an Act passed (which, considering the present state of the power of the King and Ministry, is more than probable) to prevent your marriage, you will be reduced to the most difficult of all dilemmas with respect to the footing upon which your marriage is to stand for the future; and your children will be born to pretensions which must make their situation unhappy, if not dangerous. Their situation appears to me of all others the most to be pitied; and the more so, because the more indications persons born in such circumstances give of spirits, talent, or anything that is good, the more will they be suspected and oppressed, and the more will they regret the being deprived of what they must naturally think themselves entitled to.

"I could mention many other considerations upon this business, if I did not think those I have stated of so much importance, that smaller ones would divert your attention from them rather than add to their weight. That I have written with a freedom which on any other occasion would be unbecoming I readily confess; and nothing would have induced me to do it but my deep sense of my duty to a prince who has honoured me with so much of his confidence, and who would have but an ill return for all his favour and goodness to me if I were to avoid speaking truth to him, however disagreeable, at so critical a juncture. The sum of my humble advice, nay, of my most earnest entreaty, is this: that your Royal Highness would not think of marrying till you can marry legally. When that time comes you must judge for yourself, and no doubt you will take into consideration both what is due to private honour and your public station. In the meantime a mock marriage (for it can be no other) is neither honourable for any of the

parties, nor, with respect to your Royal Highness, even safe. This appears so clear to me that, if I were Mrs. Fitzherbert's father or brother I would advise her not by any means to agree to it, and to prefer any other species of connection with you to one leading to so much misery and mischief."

The Prince of Wales did not take offence at what Fox had written. On the contrary, he sent him on the next day a most affectionate letter. "Make yourself easy, my dear friend!" he said. "Believe me, the world will now soon be convinced that there not only is not, but never was, any grounds for these reports, which of late have been so malevolently circulated." Nothing could be more reassuring, and Fox, no doubt, was duly comforted.

Four days later, on December 15, 1785, the Prince went through a ceremony of marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert.

It was soon an open secret that this had happened, but the proofs were not given to the world for one hundred years.

According to the law of England the marriage was invalid, but, as against this, it was held to be good by the canon law of the Church of Rome. In any case, unless the Act of Settlement was repealed, Mrs. Fitzherbert could never become Queen of England; nor could she become of Hanover, for, though the Royal Marriage Act did not affect that country, the marriage would have been regarded as morganatic.

In the House of Commons there was in April 1787 some discussion about a grant to relieve his Royal Highness from his notorious financial embarrassments. John (afterwards Lord) Rolle expressed a desire to have some definite pronouncement concerning the rumours

that were current concerning the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert. Pitt had nothing to say, and Sheridan, who, it may be assumed, knew what had happened, could not speak. Fox, however, intervened, and gave a categorical denial in a very vigorous speech. "With respect to the allusion to something full of 'danger to the Church and State' made by the honourable gentleman, one of the members for the county of Devon, till that gentleman thinks proper to explain himself, it is impossible to say with any certainty to what that allusion referred, but I suppose it must be meant in reference to that miserable calumny, that low falsehood, which has been propagated without doors, and made the wanton sport of the vulgar. In this House, where it is known how frequent and common the falsehoods of this time are, I hoped that a tale only fit to impose upon the lowest order of persons in the street would not have gained the smallest portion of credit; but when it appeared that an invention so monstrous, a report of a fact which has not the smallest degree of foundation, a report of a fact actually impossible to have happened, has been circulated with so much industry as to have made an impression on the minds of members of this House, it proves at once the uncommon pains taken by the enemies of his Royal Highness to propagate the grossest and most malignant falsehoods with a view to deprecate his character and injure him in the opinion of his country." This was plain speaking with a vengeance, but there was more to come. "The whole of the debt the Prince is ready to submit to the investigation of the House, and he is equally ready to submit the other circumstance to which I have alluded to their consideration, provided the consideration of a House of Parliament can, with consistency, with propriety and

decency, be applied to such a subject. Nay, his Royal Highness has authorised me to declare that, as a peer of Parliament, he is ready in the other House to submit to any the most pointed questions which can be put to him respecting it, or to afford His Majesty the fullest assurances of the utter falsehood of the fact and question, which never had and, common sense must see, never could have happened."

This speech came as a bombshell. The House of Commons, after Fox's statement made on the direct authority of the Heir-Apparent, could take the matter no further, whatever the private beliefs of individual members might be. Fox, it would appear, based his denial upon the Prince's letter already quoted. He perhaps went further than he was entitled to do, but he certainly spoke in all good faith. The Prince was alarmed by the statesman's vehemence, and frightened at the thought of his next meeting with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Mrs. Fitzherbert was vastly upset, as was only to be expected, and it was little comfort to her to be told by the Prince that he had not given any authorisation to Fox. Whatever happened, the circumstances being such as they were, the repudiation could not be repudiated. For a time she declared she must break off the connection with his Royal Highness, but presently peace was made between them. Fox, however, she never forgave, and all efforts at reconciliations were in vain. She said that he " had rolled her in the kennel like a street-walker," and she would never speak to him again. Fox himself expressed his regret, and when he became Prime Minister endeavoured to placate her by offering to recommend to the King that he should create her a duchess. It is, however, doubtful if even Mrs. Fitzherbert was more indignant than Fox. From the

House of Commons he went straight to Brooke's, and was there informed by a relative of the lady that the marriage had taken place. It must have required all his good humour to have overcome his very justifiable anger.

Something had to be done to placate Mrs. Fitzherbert and her friends. The Prince approached one statesman after another with a suggestion that some further allusion should be made to the matter in the House of Commons, but no one was prepared to get up and give Fox the lie. At last Sheridan was prevailed upon to pay some compliments and leave things as they were. "While his Royal Highness's feelings have been doubtless considered on the occasion," he said, "I must take the liberty of saying, however much some may consider it a subordinate consideration, that there is another person entitled in every honourable and delicate mind to the same attention, whom I will not otherwise attempt to describe, or allude to, except to affirm that ignorance or vulgar malice alone can have persevered in attempting to injure one whose conduct truth can affix no just reproach, and whose character claims, and is entitled to, the truest and most general respect."

Even after the *amende honorable* had been made, Mrs. Fitzherbert only forgave the Prince with difficulty. What more George could have done in the circumstances it is not easy to see. Even Mrs. Fitzherbert realised that the fact of the marriage could not be made public. The estrangement was not, however, of long duration. In May, the Prince drove the lady in his phaeton to Epsom races, and in the same evening they went together to a ball given by the Duchess of Gordon.

Now, not only her old friends, but also many of those members of society, such as the Duchess of Portland, who had held aloof, called on Mrs. Fitzherbert,

regarding her as an injured woman. "Mrs. Fitzherbert informed me," wrote Lord Stourton, "that the public supported her by their conduct on this occasion; for at no part of her life were their visits so numerous at her house as on the day which followed Mr. Fox's memorable speech; and, to use her own expression, the knocker of her door was never still during the whole day." It is not surprising, however, that the Archbishop of Canterbury should have thought it "very odd" that "the lady is more received than ever she was, and stands more forward."

The Prince was at this time much engaged with the building of the Pavilion at Brighton, and he spent several months every year at the watering-place, which he, more than anyone, caused to become a fashionable resort. Mrs. Fitzherbert in these days usually accompanying him—His Royal Highness staying at his own residence; the lady renting a house close by on The Steyne. They were there in July 1787, and again in the following summer. The following is an extract from the Brighton correspondent of the *Morning Post*, and appeared in the issue of that paper for August 9, 1788.

> "The Prince of Wales gains many hearts by his great affability and good humour. His company is much better than it used to be, and he is certainly more sparing of his libations to Bacchus.
>
> "Mrs. F——t looks more elegant than ever, and one can, indeed, hardly help exclaiming with the army of Mahomet the Second, when he showed them his Irene, 'Such a woman is worth a kingdom!'
>
> "The Prince of Wales has won money on the races —more money than one would wish a Prince of Wales to win."

The influence of Mrs. Fitzherbert over the Prince of Wales was all for good. He kept better company, drank less, gambled not at all. In fact, he led a reasonably respectable life. Of course he was not faithful to Mrs. Fitzherbert, but she closed her eyes to these passing liaisons, regarding them as beneath her notice. One intrigue of his attracted a good deal of attention—that with Anna Maria Crouch, the singer and actress, who had separated from her husband in 1791, and was the mistress of Michael Kelly, whose pupil she had been.

As she was a reigning sovereign at Brighton, so in London, Mrs. Fitzherbert kept up an almost royal state. With part of the money that had been granted in 1787 to the Prince for the payment of his debts, His Royal Highness took for her a mansion in Pall Mall, which, at his expense, was equipped with the utmost luxury.

A picture of the establishment is given in the Journal of Mary Frampton, who had known Mrs. Fitzherbert as a girl: "When Mrs. Fitzherbert was living in Pall Mall, within a few doors of Carlton House, we were at one of the assemblies she gave, which was altogether one of the most splendid I was ever at. Attendants in green and gold, besides the usual livery servants, were stationed in the rooms and up the staircase to announce the company and carry about refreshments, etc. The house was most beautifully furnished; one room was hung with blue satin. A whole-length picture of the Prince of Wales, and his bust and that of the Duke of York, ornamented the dining-rooms. Her own manners ever remained quiet, civil, and unpretending; and in the days of her greatest influence she was never accused of using it improperly."

At the end of 1788 the King was seriously ill—the illness

being of a mental nature—and the appointment of a Regent had to be decided by Parliament. There was at once brought into the foreground of all discussions, public as well as private, the relations of Mrs. Fitzherbert with the Prince of Wales, who naturally was the person to be chosen. Mrs. Fitzherbert believed that when His Royal Highness became Regent he would openly avow the marriage. The trouble was that many other people believed the same. There was an acrimonious debate in the House of Commons in February 1789. The official Bill enacted that if the Prince "shall at any time marry a Papist, then, and in every case, all his powers and authorities, vested in his said Royal Highness, by virtue of this Act, shall cease and determine." John (afterwards Baron) Rolle, Member for Devonshire, moved an amendment, to insert after "or shall at any time marry a Papist," the words "or shall at any time be proved to be married, in fact, or in law, to a Papist." As was only to be expected, a tremendous hubbub arose, which was only stilled, in the end, by a Ministerial announcement denying the marriage. On the eve of the Regency Bill becoming law, the King recovered. A cartoon, "The Funeral Procession of Miss Regency," with Mrs. Fitzherbert as chief mourner, epitomised the position. When the Prince did become Regent, a score of years later, he had long since parted company with Mrs. Fitzherbert.

For the next few years everything went on very much the same as before between Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince. "He is even more attached to her than ever," Lord Malmesbury wrote in June 1792; "he is now more under her influence than ever." They went together to Brighton and elsewhere, and the only apparent blot on their happiness was their heavy indebtedness. To meet

urgent demands, sometimes one or other was compelled to pledge jewels or plate.

" The Prince is too much a lady's man ever to be the man of any lady," Sheridan said, and the truth of this remark became increasingly obvious. One of the results, direct or indirect, was a degree of estrangement. The Duke of Gloucester told Mrs. Harcourt, who, of course, made a note of it, that " the marriage between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert was without much love on either side. He had his amusements elsewhere, but he had much consideration for her. She was sometimes jealous and discontented ; her temper violent, though apparently so quiet. He hoped the Prince would remain in her hands, as she was no political intriguer, and probably, if they parted, he would fall into worse hands."

What the Duke of Gloucester feared soon came to pass. The Prince came under the influence of Frances, wife of George Bussy Villiers, fourth Earl of Jersey, a man of courtly manners, who has been described by Mrs. Montagu as the " Prince of Maccaronies." His wife, the daughter of the Bishop of Raphoe, had been known as " the beautiful Miss Twysden, and, although she was now forty-one and the mother of a large family, she was still extremely handsome. She exercised what Wraxall has described as her " irresistible fascination and charm " to effect the conquest of the Heir-Apparent. Her success was not long delayed. News of this new affair of the Prince was soon communicated to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and, when His Royal Highness had broken one or two engagements with her, her pride rebelled, and she went abroad for a while.

CHAPTER V

CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES (1768–1821): (I) WIFE

"Your Majesty's Greatest Enemy"—The Prince of Wales's Marriage—His heavy financial liabilities—He applies to Pitt for relief—An execution at Carlton House—Carlton House closed—Mrs. Fitzherbert—The Prince consents to marry—Princess Caroline of Brunswick—The Court of Brunswick—Caroline as a child—Her wit and waywardness—An attractive girl—Her love of children—Sir James Harris demands her in marriage for the Prince—His accounts of Caroline—Lady Jersey—Caroline comes to England—Her first meeting with the Prince—Marriage—George takes a dislike to his bride—His ill-treatment of her—The birth of Princess Charlotte of Wales—Separation agreed upon.

When an officer of his Household informed George IV of the death of Napoleon in May 1821 in these words, "Your Majesty's greatest enemy is dead," "Thank God she is dead," replied the King piously, assuming that it was the death of his Consort which was thus announced to him.

For years, and times without number, it had been urged upon the Prince of Wales that it was his duty to marry, but he had always refused point-blank. The mere fact that it was his father's wish he should contract an alliance was in itself sufficient for him passionately to desire to remain single. "I will never marry! My resolution is taken on that subject! I have settled it with Frederick! No, I will never marry!" he said excitedly to Sir James Harris (afterwards created Earl of Malmesbury) in 1784, who tried to mediate between the King and his eldest son in this matter. The efforts of others met with as little success. Later, his relations

with Mrs. Fitzherbert further complicated the question.

The Prince was heavily in debt, largely owing to his extravagance and his dissipated manner of living, and the matter was becoming a public scandal. Parliament was not unwilling to relieve the Heir-Apparent from his embarrassments. The King, however, would have none of it, and commanded his Ministers to reject any suggestion of a grant. Of course, the King said, in effect, when the marriage of his son was announced, then it would be possible, indeed it was quite clear that it would be necessary, to reconsider the position.

This unpleasing, sordid quarrel continued. Neither father nor son would give way. In 1786 the Prince asked Pitt to propose in the House of Commons a vote of a quarter of a million. Pitt temporised; in the end did nothing. The Prince, in despair, approached the King, who, after some correspondence, declined in definite terms to sanction any application for an increase of his son's allowance.

Thereupon the Prince announced that it was his intention to shut up Carlton House and live in the country as a private gentleman on a small estate, and to set aside forty thousand a year of his income for his creditors. The King did not regard the threat seriously, and was unmoved in his attitude.

Perhaps the deciding point was that in this year an execution was put in at Carlton House for six hundred pounds, and the sheriff's officers remained in possession for some days, until with difficulty a surety could be found for this small debt. The Prince closed Carlton House, and stopped the building operations there that were then in progress—he had a mania for building; he greatly reduced his racing stud; sold many of his carriage horses, and even some of the carriages—the

horses and carriages realised 7,225 guineas; and he dismissed his Household, retaining only the services of three gentlemen. Into further details of his drastic economies it is unnecessary to enter.

The unequal struggle went on, becoming more and more bitter every year. It endured until 1794, when the Prince capitulated. He undertook to marry, provided his liabilities were met, and an allowance that he regarded as adequate was conceded. It was, no doubt, as much for this reason as for any other that his Royal Highness broke off his relations with Mrs. Fitzherbert.

George III was greatly pleased. All his life, and in every incident in his life, he was the most obstinate of men, and now this game, after a fight enduring ten years, he had won. He at once communicated with Pitt. "Agreeable to what I mentioned to Mr. Pitt before I came here," he wrote to the Prime Minister from Weymouth, August 24, 1794, "I have this morning seen the Prince of Wales, who has acquainted me with his having broken off all connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and his desire of entering into a more creditable line of life by marrying; expressing at the same time that my niece, the Princess of Brunswick, may be the person. Undoubtedly she is the person who naturally must be most agreeable to *me*. I expressed my approbation of the idea, provided his plan was to lead a life that would make him appear respectable, and consequently render the Princess happy. He assured me that he perfectly coincided with me in opinion. I then said that, till Parliament assembled, no arrangement could be taken except my sounding my sister, that no idea of any other marriage may be entertained."

It was immaterial to the King whom the Prince of Wales married, save that she must be of royal blood

and, of course, a Protestant. As regards His Royal Highness, it is reported that he said, "One damned German *frau* is as good as another." And he really seems to have meant it.

In effect there were only two persons eligible.

One was Louisa, a Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who afterwards became Queen of Prussia. She, however, was a niece of the Queen, herself from the same State. This decided his Royal Highness, who said unkindly, but with the utmost sincerity, "One of that family is enough."

The other was Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, second daughter of Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, and his Consort (*née* Princess Augusta of England, eldest daughter of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and sister of George III). It was this lady who was chosen to be Princess of Wales. She was then in her twenty-seventh year, six years the junior of the Prince of Wales.

There was a certain elegance at the Court of Brunswick, and the Duke was a man of polished manners, and not without dignity; but impartial observers noted a lack of morality remarkable even in a German Court in the eighteenth century. Indeed, it modelled itself on Versailles. The Duke had a mistress, an accomplished woman, Madame de Hertzfeldt, who was so good an influence and kept him so well under control that, whenever the Duke began to show an interest in another woman, the Duchess, a good-natured but foolish woman, joined with Madame de Hertzfeldt to keep the disturber of the peace at a safe distance from the amorous monarch. Caroline, always precocious, noticed many things that might have escaped the attention of other children. She hated her formal governesses and attendants, and always

escaped when she could to the more free atmosphere of the Court.

Quickly Caroline developed a sense of humour—which, as it turned out, was one of the qualities which presently was to infuriate her husband, who was not apt at repartee. Asked one day to define time and space, the young girl, thinking of an ugly old Lady-in-Waiting, answered: "You can see space in the mouth of Madam X, and time in her face."

There is another story of this period. She loved argument, and her agile brain early enabled her to score off her elders.

"Madam, can you tell me why you are wicked?" she asked the Baroness de Bode, her first governess.

The lady, not unnaturally, was taken aback, but contrived to reply: "Because an evil spirit impels to do what is wrong."

"But why do you suffer yourself to be impelled?"

"Because I cannot overcome my bad nature."

"Oh, you cannot," said the Princess. "Well, if you cannot, you are only like a piece of clay; and so, Madam, I do not think it very wicked of you to be moulded."

In vain the Baroness attempted to explain, but the girl would not listen to further arguments on the vexed question of predestination and free will, and walked away, murmuring, "We are all very bad, very bad, but were so created."

Caroline, who from an early age was unwisely allowed to run wild, soon became wilful, and always tried to have her own way. When she was disappointed of an anticipated pleasure, she endeavoured to revenge herself on those who had thwarted her, and her methods of so doing were not always very savoury. For instance, she was forbidden to attend a great Court ball, and nothing

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she could say would induce her mother to withdraw her prohibition.

Shortly after the ball had begun the Duke and Duchess were informed that the Princess had been taken suddenly ill. They went to Caroline's apartments and found her in bed, screaming, "I am in labour," she said, "and entreat you to send at once for an accoucheur." When at last the doctor arrived Caroline wiped off the livid colouring from her face, jumped out of bed, and said with a hearty laugh, "Now, will you keep me from a ball another time?" It is not a pleasant story, but it has to be told because it was typical of Caroline as woman as well as girl. She was always making silly, rather disgusting jokes, and to the end found enjoyment in them to her own ultimate unhappiness.

Even making due allowance for the flattery usually accorded to royalty, Caroline when a young girl was, according to all accounts, quite attractive. Sir John Thomas Stanley, who, scarcely older than herself, fell in love with her, thus described her: "The Caroline of fourteen years old, the lively, pretty Caroline, the girl my eyes had so often rested on, with light and powdered hair hanging in curls on her neck, the lips from which only sweet words seemed as if they could flow, with looks animated, and always simply and modestly dressed."

In addition to good looks, Caroline had remarkably high spirits, a pleasing, even if somewhat boisterous manner, some liking for music, and the ability to chatter with about equal inaccuracy in English, French, and Italian. It must especially be noted, in view of the tale to be unfolded, that she was always averse to the strict etiquette of the Court, and that she had, in an exaggerated degree, her mother's freedom of speech. Further, she

always had a strong liking for children, and a good-looking girl or boy always attracted her. She had in Brunswick many youthful protégés. It was these three qualities that led up to the tragedy of her life. At the age of twenty-six she was still unmarried—and this in spite of the fact that she had been brought up neither as a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, so as to be eligible as a wife for a prince belonging to either religion.

After the preliminary negotiations between George III and the Duke of Brunswick, Lord Malmesbury was instructed to proceed to Brunswick formally to demand the hand of the Princess Caroline for the Prince of Wales. He arrived on November 1, 1794, and was at once received by the Duke and Duchess and presented to the Princess.

The Duke, it is clear, while desiring this magnificent alliance, was nevertheless extremely worried as to what might be the outcome of it, and he was at no pains to disguise from the Envoy his apprehension. "The Duke entered fully into her future character—was perfectly aware of the character of the Prince, and of the inconveniences that would result, almost with equal ill-effect, either from his liking the Princess too much or too little," Lord Malmesbury noted. He said of his daughter, "*Elle n'est pas bête, mais elle n'a pas de judgment, elle a été élevée sévèrement, et il le falloit.*" The Duke requested me to recommend to her discretion not to *ask questions*, and, above all, not to be free in giving opinions of persons and things aloud; and he hinted delicately, but very pointedly, at the free and unreserved manners of the Duchess, who at times is certainly apt to forget her audience. He desired me to advise her never to show any jealousy of the Prince, and that, if he had any *goûts*, not to notice them."

The Duke, of course, had himself put these points to the Princess, but he thought that it would make a greater impression on her if Lord Malmesbury repeated them. This, of course, was no part of the Envoy's duty, but, good-naturedly, he undertook the task. He advised her to avoid familiarity, to have no *confidantes*, to avoid giving any opinion; to approve, but not to admire excessively; to be perfectly silent on politics and party; to be very attentive and respectful to the Queen; to endeavour, at all events, to be well with her. This was a counsel of perfection, and was well received by the Princess, but, in the end, it shared the fate of most such counsels. Lord Malmesbury, who knew what was before the Princess, was at great pains to stress the drawbacks as well as the privileges of the exalted position to which she was called, and he said again and again that, in the order of society, those of a very high rank have a price to pay for it, and that the life of a Princess of Wales is not one of all pleasure, dissipation, and enjoyment; that the great and conspicuous advantages belonging to it must necessarily be purchased by considerable sacrifices.

"The Princess Caroline has no *fonds*, no fixed character, a light and a flighty mind, but meaning well and well-disposed; and my eternal theme to her is, *to think before she speaks, to recollect herself*," he set down in his diary after he had been six weeks at the Court of Brunswick. "She says she wishes to be *loved* by the people. This, I assure her, can only be obtained by making herself respected and *rare*, that the sentiment of being *loved* by the people is a mistaken one—that sentiment can only be given to a few, to a narrow circle of those we see every day—that a nation at large can only respect and honour a great princess, and it is, in fact, these feelings that are falsely denominated the *love of a nation;* they are not

to be procured as the goodwill of individuals is, by pleasant openness and free communication, but by a strict attention to appearances, by never going below the high rank in which a princess is placed, either in language or manners, by evincing dignity and affability, which, without it, becomes familiarity and levels all distinction."

Day in, day out, Lord Malmesbury preached his sermons on this and similar themes. "All this the Princess *still* takes well," he noted; "but in the long run it must displease." It says much for her good sense that she never did resent these preachings; in fact, she expressed the hope that Lord Malmesbury might be appointed her Lord Chamberlain.

The Princess was, of course, as well aware as her father what sort of man the Prince of Wales was. She knew about Mrs. Fitzherbert, and also about his various intrigues. "I am determined never to be jealous," she said. "I know the Prince is *leger*, and am prepared on this point."

The relations between the Prince and Lady Jersey had not, of course, escaped the notice of Lord Malmesbury. In his Diary for December 7, 1794, he noted: "Lady Elizabeth Eden, whom I carried home from Court, said that Lady Jersey was very well with the Queen; that she went frequently to Windsor, and appeared as a sort of favourite." To which he added sagely, "This, if true, is most strange and bodes no good." Caroline, too, was curious about Lady Jersey, and asked Lord Malmesbury about her, appearing to suppose her an *intrigante*, but not to know of any partiality or connection between her and the Prince. This, however, was not all.

"At dinner," Lord Malmesbury wrote on December

28, "I found the Duchess and the Princess alarmed, agitated, and uneasy at an anonymous letter from England abusing the Prince, and warning them in the most exaggerated terms against Lady Jersey, who is represented as the worst and most dangerous of profligate women. The Duchess, with her usual indiscretion, had shown this to the Princess, and mentioned it to everybody. I was quite angry with her and could not avoid expressing my concern, first at paying *any* attention to an anonymous letter, and, secondly, at being so very imprudent as to bruit about its contents. The Princess soon recovered from it, but the Duchess harped on it all day. The Duke, on being acquainted with it, thought as I did, but was more uneasy about it than he ought."

Lord Malmesbury thought that it was probably written by a disappointed milliner or an angry maid-servant, and was surprised that the Duke afforded it any attention. It was, he thought, "aimed at Lady Jersey; its object was to frighten the Princess with the idea that she would lead her into an affair of gallantry, and be ready to be convenient on such an occasion. This did *not* frighten the Princess, although it did the Duke and Duchess; and, on my perceiving this, I told her Lady Jersey would be more cautious than to risk such an audacious measure, and that, besides, it was *death* to presume to approach a Princess of Wales, and no man would be daring enough to think of it. She asked me whether I was in earnest. I said, such was our law, that anybody who presumed to *love* her was guilty of *high treason*, and punished with *death* if she was weak enough to listen to him; so also would *she*. This startled her."

The Princess Caroline was, however, little troubled

about Lady Jersey. What did worry her was the belief that the Queen might show herself jealous of the Consort of the Heir-Apparent. Also—for she was of an affectionate disposition, she was sad at leaving her own country for a foreign land, where she had no friends and but few acquaintances.

Accompanied by her mother and a numerous suite, with Lord Malmesbury in charge, Princess Caroline left Brunswick on December 30, 1794, for England. Owing to the war, the Channel was unsafe, and the journey was interrupted by a long stay at Hanover, where came Mrs. Harcourt to act as Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess. Mrs. Harcourt was most appreciative of her royal mistress. "I am sure the Prince will love her, she is so affectionate, and he is so good-natured, and her desire to please is very engaging. In looks there is some resemblance, in miniature, to what Mrs. Fitzherbert was when young," she wrote at this time. "She is all openness of heart, and has not a shadow of pride. She seems of a cheerful temper, perfectly void of art and design."

On the voyage the Princess won golden opinions. "I see our English captains are enchanted with her," Mrs. Harcourt recorded, and, even at her making allowance for the attractions of royalty, she had certainly formed a highly favourable impression. "Her sweet temper and affability of manner has charmed and delighted every one. . . . She is always contented and always in good humour, and shows such pleasant, unaffected joy at the idea of her prospect."

On Saturday, April 5, Caroline arrived at Greenwich.

From that day everything went wrong.

She was to have been met there by Lady Jersey and other members of her new Household. As a matter of fact, they came late, owing, it was said, to the deliberate

intention of Lady Jersey to keep the Princess waiting. It was, of course, a crying scandal that Lady Jersey should have been appointed by him a Lady of the Bedchamber to his Consort. Lady Jersey, a most unscrupulous woman, desired the appointment, as it would in all probability enable her to prejudice the relations of husband and wife, and so keep herself foremost in the Prince's affections.

From the first Lady Jersey took, or at least attempted to take, a high hand with her royal mistress. She sneered at her costume—a proceeding in doubtful taste, but not altogether without justification. Caroline's dress certainly left much to be desired, and, with all the resources she had at her command, she was never well turned out on any occasion. Her fancy was for the bizarre. She arrived at Greenwich wearing a muslin dress with a blue satin petticoat, and a black beaver hat with waving blue and black feathers. Before setting out for London she changed into a white satin dress which Lady Jersey had brought down for her. Over this she put a mantle of green satin trimmed with gold and adorned with loops and tassels à la Brandenburg. She rejected the turban of white satin trimmed with crêpe and decorated with white feathers : nothing would induce her to desert her black beaver hat.

When the carriages came to take the party to London Lady Jersey at first protested that she could not sit with her back to the horses, and suggested that she should seat herself beside the Princess. Lord Malmesbury at once told her that, as she must have known riding backward in a coach disagreed with her, she ought never to have accepted the situation of a Lady of the Bedchamber, who ought never to sit forward ; and he added if she was really likely to be sick he would put Mrs. Aston in the

coach with the Princess. That, as Lord Malmesbury remarked drily, settled the business.

When Caroline arrived at St. James's Palace the Prince of Wales came from Carlton House to welcome her. When George entered her apartment, as she was kneeling, he raised her, embraced her casually, said barely a word, and walked away from her. "I am not very well; pray get me a glass of brandy," he said to Lord Malmesbury, who was the only witness of the scene. Malmesbury evidently thought the Prince had had brandy enough, and suggested a glass of water. "No," said his Royal Highness with an oath, and went away. "My God, is the Prince always like that?" she asked. Then she added, "I find him very fat, and not nearly so good-looking as his portrait."

Truly an inauspicious beginning.

The Princess felt herself outraged; and she was not a woman to let herself be insulted with impunity. The trouble was, as the Duke of Brunswick and Lord Malmesbury had foreseen, that she did not preserve her dignity, and so lost her advantage. At a State dinner that same evening she let her impish humour carry her away, and was flippant and full of raillery, and, what was worse, from the ceremonial point of view, she made Lady Jersey the target of her wit. It was a terrible evening for everybody present, including not least of all herself.

The marriage was celebrated at eight o'clock in the evening of April 8 in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The bride behaved gravely and decently, and in order. The bridegroom, however, Lady Maria Stuart noted, "looked like death and full of confusion, as if he wanted to hide himself from the looks of the whole world." This account may well be true, for the Duke of Bedford told Lord Holland that the Prince was so drunk that he

could scarcely support him from falling. " Judge what it was," his Consort said later, " to have a drunken husband on one's wedding-day, and one who passed the greatest part of his bridal-night in the grate where he fell, and where I left him." For two or three weeks George and Caroline lived together as husband and wife, and then never again.

George objected to his consort for many reasons. He had not wanted to marry her ; he disliked her face and her figure ; he objected strongly to her slovenly mode of dressing ; and her manner—he who was used to subservience from women—almost alarmed him.

The Princess, for her part, was miserable. " The moment I saw my *futur* and Lady Jersey together I knew how it would be, and I said to myself, ' Oh, very well ! ' I took my *partie*—but, oh mine God ! I could be the slave of a man I love ; but one whom I love not and who does not love me, impossible—that is a very different thing."

The Prince of Wales did, indeed, give her many a cause for acute dissatisfaction. Even on the honeymoon he asked a party of (as the bride described them) " very blackguard companions, who were constantly drunk and filthy, sleeping and snoring in boots on the sofas." He inflicted every possible insult on her, and encouraged his intimates to play practical jokes on her. He even caused to be removed from her dining-room at Carlton House all the furniture except the table and two shabby chairs. Anything, however puerile, to anger and humiliate her.

" I expect speedily to be mother of an infant," Caroline wrote to a friend in Germany in December 1795. " I know not how I shall be able to support myself in the hour of solitude, but I trust in the benevolence of Heaven. The Queen seldom visits me, and my sisters-in-law

are equally attentive. Yet the English I admire, and when I appear in public nothing can be more flattering than the reception which I meet with. I was much gratified some time ago with a visit to one of the principal theatres. The spectacle was imposing, and when the audience rose to sing the National Anthem I thought I had never witnessed anything so grand before. Yet why do I tell you these things? I am surrounded with miserable and evil principles, and whatever I attempt is misrepresented here. The Countess of Jersey still continues here. I hate her, and I am confident that she does me no less. My husband is very partial to her, and so the rest you will be able to divine. They tell me I shall have a girl. The Prince wants a boy, but I do not care which. By the laws of England the parents have but little to do with it in future life. This I shudder at very greatly."

The Princess of Wales gave birth, at Carlton House, on January 7, 1796, to a daughter, who was named Charlotte Augusta, after her grandmothers, the Queen and the Duchess of Brunswick.

Almost immediately afterwards a message came to her that the Prince had decided that they should never again live together. "As I lay in—*je vous jure*, 'tis true, upon my honour, upon my soul, 'tis true, I received a message through Lord Cholmondeley [Master of the Household of the Prince of Wales], to tell me I never was to have the honour of inhabiting the same room with my husband again. I said, very well—but, as my memory was short, I begged to have this polite message in writing from him. I had it—and was free. I left Carlton House, and went to Charlton. Oh! how happy I was! Everybody blamed me, but I never repented me of this step. Oh, mine God, what I have suffered!

Luckily, I had a spirit, or I never should have outlived it."

The Princess at once demanded that his Royal Highness must set down his decision in writing, which at last he did, though with reluctance.

The Prince of Wales to the Princess of Wales

"Windsor Castle,

"30*th of April*, 1796.

"MADAM,—As Lord Cholmondeley informs me that you wish I would define in writing the terms upon which we are to live, I shall endeavour to explain myself upon that head, with as much clearness, and with as much propriety, as the nature of the subject will admit. Our inclinations are not in our power, nor should either of us be held answerable to the other, because nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is, however, in our power; let our intercourse, therefore, be restricted to that, and I will distinctly subscribe to the condition which you required, through Lord Cholmondeley, that even in the event of any accident happening to my daughter, which I trust Providence in its mercy will avert, I shall not infringe the terms of the restriction by proposing, at any period, a connection of a more particular nature. I shall now finally close this disagreeable correspondence, trusting that, as we have completely explained ourselves to each other, the rest of our lives will be passed in uninterrupted tranquillity.

"I am, Madam,

"With great truth,

"Very sincerely yours,

"GEORGE P."

The Princess of Wales to the Prince of Wales

" *Le 6 Mai*, 1796.

" L'aveu de votre conversation avec Lord Cholmondeley ne m'étonne, ni m'offense. C'étoit me confirmer, ce que vous m'avez tacitement insinué depuis une année, mais il y auroit après cela, un manque de délicatesse, ou pour mieux dire, une bassesse indigne de me plaindre des conditions que vous vous imposez à vous-même.

" Je ne vous aurois fait de reponse si votre lettre n'étoit conçue de manière à faire doubter si cet arrangement vient de vous ou de moi ; et vous savez que vous en avez seul l'honneur. La lettre, que vous m'annoncez comme la dernière, m'oblige de communiquer au roi, comme à mon souverain, et à mon père, votre aveu et ma reponse. Vous trouverez cie-inclus la copie de celle que j'écris au roi. Je vous en préviens pour ne pas m'attirer de votre part la moindre reproche de duplicité. Comme je n'ai dans ce moment d'autre protecteur que sa majesté, je m'en rapporte uniquement à lui. Et si ma conduite mérite son approbation, je serai, du moins, en partie, consolée.

" Du reste, je conserve toute la connoissance possible de ce que je me trouve par votre moyen, comme Princesse de Galles, dans un situation à pouvoir me livrer sans contrainte, à un vertu chère à mon cœur —je veux dire la bienfaisance. Ce sera pour moi un devoir d'agir de plus par un autre motif, savoir, celui de donner l'exemple de la patience, et de la résignation dans toutes sortes d'épreuves. Rendez-moi la justice, de me croire, que je ne cesserai jamais de faire des vœux pour votre bonheur, et d'être votre bien devouée,

" (Signé) CAROLINE."

The King, who was apparently unaware of the treatment that had been meted out to his daughter-in-law, now had to learn something of what had occurred. He desired above all things to avoid an open rupture, and suggested that they might at least reside under the same roof; but neither of the persons most directly concerned would entertain the suggestion.

CHAPTER VI

MARY AND AGNES BERRY (1763–1852)

The early acquaintances of the sisters—Their father, Robert Berry—The sisters meet Horace Walpole in 1787—His account of them—He soon becomes devoted to them—The "twin-wives"—They take up their residence at Little Strawberry Hill—Absurd scandal-mongering—Mary Berry and Walpole—Talk of their marrying—Mary Berry's love-affair—General Charles O'Hara—Their correspondence—They become engaged—O'Hara leaves England on duty—Further letters—The engagement is broken off—Mary Berry's rebuke—O'Hara's later life—Walpole's legacies to the sisters—Mary Berry's publications—The sisters' *salon* in London—Their deaths.

"A VERY few years since," Thackeray said in one of his lectures on "The Four Georges," which he first delivered in 1855, "I knew familiarly a lady who had been asked in marriage by Horace Walpole, who had been patted on the head by George III. This lady had knocked at Johnson's door; had been intimate with Fox, the beautiful Georgina of Devonshire, and that brilliant Whig society of the reign of George III; had known the Duchess of Queensberry, the patroness of Gay and Prior, the admired young beauty of the Court of Queen Anne. I often thought, as I took my kind old friend's hand, how with it I held on to the old society of wits and men of the world. I could travel back for sevenscore years of time—have glimpses of Brummell, Selwyn, Chesterfield, and the men of pleasure; of Walpole and Conway; of Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith; of North, Chatham, Newcastle; of the fair maids of honour of George II's Court; of the German retainers of George I's; where Addison was Secretary of State; where Dick Steele held a place; whither the great Marlborough came with

his fiery spouse ; when Pope, and Swift, and Bolingbroke yet lived and wrote."

The lady in question was no less a person than Mary Berry, who was born in 1763 and survived until 1852, and so was in her prime in the days of the Regency. With her may be coupled her sister Agnes, who, born fourteen months later than Mary, predeceased her by less than a year.

They were the children of a dreamer who was more interested in literature than in following his fortune in his wealthy uncle's business, by a charming young girl, who died within a few years of her marriage. Robert Berry, the father, expected to be his uncle's heir, but that no doubt excellent man of affairs thought it well to leave his fortune to one more capable of looking after it, and Robert was cut off with a paltry three hundred a year, which he in no way ever attempted to increase.

Even on this small income Berry contrived to travel with his daughters, and in 1783 they, in a modest fashion, did a kind of Grand Tour that lasted for a couple of years. Then they stayed for a while in London ; visited friends in the country. There is nothing of interest to relate until the winter of 1787, when, at the house of Lady Herries, they met Horace Walpole. In the following summer they rented a house at Twickenham, and the acquaintance with him ripened quickly into intimacy.

It is worth while to give an extract from the first letter, dated October 11, 1788, in which Walpole mentioned his newly-made friends, if only because he gives descriptions of each of the three members of the family. " If I have picked up no recent anecdotes on our Common, I have made a much more, to me, precious acquisition. It is the acquaintance of two young ladies of the name of Berry. . . . Mr. Berry has since carried his daughters

for two or three years to France and Italy, and they are returned the best-informed and the most charming creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected, frank, and, being qualified to talk on any subject, nothing is so easy and agreeable as their conversation, nor more apposite than their answers and observations. The eldest, I discovered by chance, understands Latin, and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language. The younger draws charmingly, and has copied admirably Lady Di [Beauclerk]'s gypsies, which I lent, though for the first time of her attempting colours. They are of pleasing figures; Mary, the eldest, sweet, with fine dark eyes, that are very lovely when she speaks, with a symmetry of face that is the more interesting from being pale; Agnes, the younger, has an agreeable, sensible countenance, hardly to be called handsome, but almost. She is less animated than Mary, but seems, out of deference to her sister, to speak seldom, for they dote on each other, and Mary is always praising her sister's talents. I must even tell you they dress within the bounds of fashion, though fashionably, but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons. In short, good sense, information, simplicity, and ease characterise the Berrys; and this is not particularly mine, who am apt to be prejudiced, but the universal voice of all who know them. The first night I met them I would not be acquainted with them, having heard so much in their praise that I concluded they would be all pretension. The second time, in a very small company, I sat next to Mary, and found her an angel both inside and out. Now I do not know which I like best, except Mary's face, which is formed for a sentimental novel, but is ten times fitter for a fifty

times better thing, genteel comedy. This delightful family comes to me almost every Sunday evening, as our region is too *proclamatory* to play at cards on the seventh day. I do not care a straw for cards, but I do disapprove of this partiality to the youngest child of the week, while the other six poor days are treated as if they had no souls to save. I forgot to tell you that Mr. Berry is a little, merry man with a round face, and you would not suspect him of so much feeling and attachment."

Horace Walpole was at this time in his seventy-second year; the young ladies aged twenty-five and twenty-four respectively. He soon grew devoted to them—a man of many acquaintances but little affection had so far been his portion. They gave him devotion, and he lavished upon them all the tenderness he had stored up during his three-score years and ten. "I have received at once most kind letters from you both; too kind, for you both talk of gratitude," he protested. "Mercy on me! Which is the obliged and which the gainer? Two charming beings, whom everybody likes and approves, and yet can be pleased with the company and conversation and old stories of a Methuselah? or I, who at the end of my days have fallen into more agreeable society than ever I knew at any period of my life." They were to him his "twin-wives" or his "beloved spouses"; Mary was "suavissima Maria"; Agnes, "my sweet lamb."

The Berrys had a certain number of acquaintances in London before they met Horace Walpole, but it was Horace who launched these two middle-class young women in Society. Through him they met his intimates, the Conways, and so indirectly their friendship, and especially Mary's, with Mrs. Damer (*née* Anne Seymour Conway), was owing to his introduction.

In October 1790 the Berrys went abroad, and remained away for a year. During this period they were, happily, for posterity, in constant correspondence with Walpole, who sorely lamented their absence, though he was pleased enough, or tried to be, that they were enjoying themselves. On their return they stayed at South Audley Street, but Walpole wanted them near him, and begged them to take up their residence at Little Strawberry Hill, close by his own house. This small place he had christened " Cliveden " or " Clivesden," because Kitty Clive had lived there after her retirement from the stage, in 1769, until her death, sixteen years later. The Berrys accepted the loan of Little Strawberry Hill ; but when the fact became known some scandal-mongers made capital of it ; and when Mary Berry learned what was being said she told Walpole they must withdraw their acceptance of his offer. " I thought my age would allow me to have a friendship that consisted in nothing but distinguishing merit. You allow the vilest of all tribunals, the newspapers, to decide how short a way friendship may go," he wrote hotly. " Where is your good sense in this conduct ? And will you punish me because what you nor mortal being can prevent, a low anonymous scribbler pertly takes a liberty with your name ? I cannot help repeating that you have hurt me." In the end, after a good deal of argument, Walpole had his way, and the sisters made their home at Little Strawberry Hill.

George, third Earl of Orford, died on December 5, 1791, and Horace Walpole, his uncle, succeeded to the title, much to his annoyance, for, as he said, what conceivable advantage could come to him at seventy-four with " a small estate, loaded with debt, and of which I do not understand the management, and am too old to

learn ; a source of law-suits amongst my nearest relatives, though not affecting me ; endless conversations with lawyers, and packets of letters to read every day and answer," and so on. The one pleasant thing was that his wife would be a countess, if she cared for that sort of thing, and that he could charge the estate with a jointure for her of £2,000 a year.

Lord Lansdowne believed that Walpole, after he became a peer, thought of asking Mary Berry for her hand. It is nearly certain that he not only did not do so, but never even spoke of the matter to her. It may be taken for granted that, had he strongly desired to marry her, he would have done so irrespective of his nephew's death. " Although I have no doubt that Lord Orford said to Lady D. every word that she repeated to your brother—for last winter, at the time the C.'s talked about the matter, he went about saying all this and more to frighten everybody that would hear him—but I always thought it rather to frighten and punish them than seriously wishing it himself," Mary Berry wrote, with great good sense, to a friend in August 1793. " And why should he, when, without the ridicule or the trouble of marriage, he enjoys almost as much of my society, and every comfort from it, that he could in the nearest connection ? As the willing offering of a grateful and affectionate heart, the time and attention I bestow upon him have hitherto given me pleasure. Were they to become a duty, and a duty to which the world would attribute interested motives, they would become irksome. If the world, its meanness, its total indifference to everything but interest, in some shape or other, be assured, you cannot think as badly nor so *truly* as I do. ' They but believe it who have felt it most ! ' "

Among the correspondence of Mary Berry that has

been preserved is a batch of letters exchanged between her, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, and General O'Hara, written when she was engaged to the soldier. These she could not bring herself to destroy, and she left them in a packet, with the following note, written so long after as 1844.

"This parcel of letters relates to the six happiest months of my long and insignificant existence, although these six months were accompanied by fatiguing and unavoidable uncertainty, and by the absence of every thing that could constitute present enjoyment. But I looked forward to a future existence which I felt for the first time would have called out all the powers of my mind and all the warmest feelings of my heart, and should have been supported by one who but for the cruel absence which separated us, would never have for a moment doubted that we should have materially contributed to each other's happiness. These prospects served even to pass cheerfully a long winter of delays and uncertainty, by keeping my mind firmly riveted on their accomplishment. A concatenation of unfortunate circumstances—the political crisis of Europe making absence a necessity and even frequent communication impossible, letters lost and delayed, all certainty of meeting more difficult, questions unanswered, doubts unsatisfied—all these circumstances combined in the most unlucky manner, crushed the fair fabric of my happiness, not at one fell swoop, but by the slow mining misery of loss of confidence, of unmerited complaints, of finding by degrees misunderstandings, and the firm rock of mutual confidence crumbling under my feet, while my bosom for long could not banish a hope that all might yet be set right. And so it would, had we ever met for twenty-four hours! But he remained at his government at Gibraltar till his death, in 1802. And I, forty-two

years afterwards, on opening these papers, which had been sealed up ever since, receive the conviction that some feelings in some minds are indelible."

This was the one serious love-affair in the life of Mary Berry; her girlish passion for a Mr. Bowden when she was sixteen does not count.

O'Hara, who was an illegitimate son of James O'Hara, second Baron Tyrawley, entered the Army in 1752 (at the age of twelve !) as a cornet in the 3rd Dragoons. He saw a good deal of active service on the Continent and in America. He was with Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, and was kept prisoner until 1782, by which time he had been promoted major-general. He was released in 1782, and in the following year met the Berrys in Italy. Horace Walpole, who apparently liked him, wrote to Mary Berry in September 1795, when she was staying at Cheltenham: "I am delighted that you have got O'Hara. How he must feel his felicity in being at liberty to rove about as much as he likes. Still, I shall not admire his volatility if he quits you soon." What had happened in the meantime between Mary Berry and O'Hara has not transpired, but when Walpole wrote to her she and the General were engaged. The engagement, however, was kept a secret from everybody except Mrs. Damer; not even Walpole was told.

Perhaps an onlooker might have had doubts about the affair. O'Hara fifty-five, Mary Berry thirty-two. O'Hara had doubtless had many love-passages; Mary had had none. Mrs. Damer, too wise to speak directly, was apparently anxious to give, so directly as possible, an indication that to her all did not seem well.

"O'Hara has this moment almost left me. I have only taken just time to recover a little after one of *his* interesting and tender interviews, and am set down to

give you an account of our conversation. At first, he said little and seemed rather to avoid the subject that evidently occupied his mind, but between us there was too much sympathy for that disposition to last. He, then, *mutatis mutandis*, said what he had said to you, what you had told me, and often in the same words. He has, or I am much mistaken, determined upon a character to which he will act up thro' life, little consonant with his own feelings and sentiments, and to this is he now sacrificing his own future comfort and happiness, and is avoiding, if not the *only* Being, certainly the Being most calculated to constitute both, for I am persuaded that he has a heart capable of knowing and valuing *you*. He talked much indeed of this *ridicule*, but it sometimes seemed to me that it was not merely that, but a combination of ideas which tended, it is true, all the same way, and led him thus on *whither* he did not seem clearly to know himself. Many things he said were full of contradictions, but to the end, and where I ought to have begun, he said that he *thinks* he will not see you—is, I conclude, afraid to trust himself."

O'Hara, who spent October (1795) in London, and paid frequent visits to Mrs. Damer, with whom he indulged in long talks about his fiancée, did not go down to Little Strawberry Hill. This was because of the secrecy that was being preserved, presumably out of consideration for Horace Walpole, who was near the end of his days, and who might have been upset by the thought of losing his dear friend. This consideration for him cost Mary Berry much.

Late in October, O'Hara had to leave England to resume his duties as Governor of Gibraltar, and the lovers met at the Berry's house in South Audley Street to say farewell.

From Twickenham Mary Berry, on October 21, 1795, wrote to her fiancée:

"After three or four hours of broken slumber, continually agitated with a false idea of seeing you the next day, I wake to the melancholy certainty of a long, uncertain, and painful absence. My dear friend, I find my mind much less strong than I believed it; and yet, in submitting to this absence, I *think* I am doing right. I am *sure* I am consulting the peace and happiness of those about me, and not my own. I think you will hereafter love me the better for knowing me capable of a sacrifice which you cannot now doubt how much I feel, and my future happiness (if any is in store for me) will be unsullied by the idea of having anticipated it at the expense of the feelings of others. But in the meantime you are gone and I am here, and my mind is not yet in a state to derive much comfort from cool reasoning. I feel now as if there were fifty things I should have liked to have said to you which my extreme and painful oppression prevented last night, and would, I am convinced still prevent, were you at this instant at my side. One idea, however, has so often recurred to me that I will mention it. As in every *possible* future event and circumstance I shall always be proud of your affection and sentiments for me, I beseech you, in case of illness or any danger, to send me, if possible, some token or assurance that you thought of me to the last as you do at this moment. If this is silly, forgive me. My mind will, I hope, soon recover its tone and then you shall have more comfortable letters from me—writing this has been a relief to me, and therefore I think must be some comfort to you. Let me hear from you from Portsmouth as soon as you can, I beseech you."

O'Hara obeyed Mary Berry's behest, and replied without delay:

"I am fully sensible, my Dearest Mary, that your letter ought, if I was a reasonable Being, to afford me much relief and comfort; but every moment of my existence proves, too forcibly for my peace, that comfort will be a stranger to my breast when absent from you, for I cannot, like you, from the imperfection of my nature, derive fortitude sufficient to sacrifice my own to the happiness of others. The delicacy of a mind and sensibility of heart like yours are alone equal to such a task, and tho', I assure you with much truth, I believe you are right, it will be in vain for me to profit by an example. Be fully persuaded *que c'est beaucoup plus fort que moi.* You have awakened my fears, and in some degree my curiosity, where you say, *'that you feel there were fifty things about you know not what, that you should liked to have said to me, which your painful oppression the night we parted prevented and would, you are convinced, still prevent, was I at your side.'* As I always and ever shall act without reserve in every possible circumstance of my life that may affect you, and under the full persuasion that your confidence is as unbounded as mine—open your heart to me, be the consequences ever so injurious to my happiness, for you must know me but little, if you suppose me capable of putting your peace of mind in competition with my own. Your flattering solicitude (Mary, your tenderness undoes me; how very strange that what should sooth and comfort can at the same time excite such excessive anguish) *'that I should give you, in the event of illness or danger, some token that my sentiments respecting you continued the same as at present'* makes too deep an impression for any language to express; would my heart was in your breast, for that alone could

make you sensible of the tender and affectionate regard of my dearest Mary's faithful friend.—Cha. O'Hara."

On the eve of his departure from Portsmouth, O'Hara wrote to Mary Berry on the subject of announcing the engagement—a matter upon which there had been some difference of opinion between them.

"I believe to have recommended your consulting our friend whether you should or not mention to Lord Orford our proposed connection," he said. "Upon reconsidering the matter, I would by no means have you think of it, for you owe to his affection, his friendship, and the very flattering distinction he has long, constantly, and most pointedly shown you, every degree of attention and even gratitude, and consequently to keep from him, as long as it is possible, the knowledge of an event that, separating you, will overwhelm him with sorrow and disappointment, and defeat all his views, and only substantial comfort he enjoys and probably wishes to live for. (My Dear Mary, thou art a most extraordinary creature.) In my opinion, the proper time to break it to him will be when you are at the eve of quitting your Father's house for mine, and that communication must be made by yourself. It will be childish in you, and not treating him with the deference and confidence I trust he deserves, to employ any body else. *Il s'entend* upon this occasion, as upon all others of emergency, the Dear Stick must, and I am sure will, give her friendly assistance, for, without her support, I am sure you would not be able to walk in or out of the Peer's room. I think I see you pale and trembling, thy dear delicate frame shook to pieces, hesitating what to do; and, when I put myself in your place, I feel most forcibly that upon this occasion your emotion must be great, and that reflection, when I consider the cause that agitates you,

makes me see my Dearest Mary in a point of view of all others the most interesting to my heart. Lord Orford will, for his own sake, as well as yours, receive your information kindly. You must, however, be prepared possibly for some sudden, peevish animadversions upon your marriage, some dictated by friendship, and others by resentment. Be that as it may, he has a claim upon your patient hearing, and possibly you may profit from the many truths he will lay before you, drawn from his long experience of the world. He will endeavour to prove, what with him admits of no doubt, the excessive folly of burning incense at any other shrines but those of *Wealth and Birth.* Poor me, I feel humbled to the dust when I think of either. And when he has talked himself out of arguments, which, *à coup sûr*, will not be till out of breath, preserve a respectful silence, for you will plead in vain to a judge who, being so differently composed as yourself, it is perfectly impossible you should understand each other. The Noble Earl takes glitter, show, and precedency—all very good things in their way as appendages, but not commanding features—for his guide. Thy sober, chaste mind builds its happiness (God forbid it prove delusive) upon being the comfort, the support, the warm disinterested friend of a Man who has nothing to give but reciprocal feelings. With all the respect and deference I really have for Lord Orford, and making every reasonable allowance for the claim he has upon your gratitude, if he is really your friend, unwarped by selfish considerations, he ought to rejoice at an event you contemplate with pleasure, he ought, from his knowledge of you, to think you perfectly competent to judge for yourself what are the qualities you wish the Man to possess to whom you give your Person and dedicate your time for life."

The correspondence continued for a while. Mary Berry believed that the day of marriage was close at hand; but the marriage was not to be. O'Hara no doubt felt aggrieved that his fiancée should put the feelings of another before his own, and in June 1796 the engagement was broken off. "Alas, my dear friend, how have you trifled and *doubted* away both your own happiness and mine," Mary Berry wrote to him.

O'Hara, who remained at Gibraltar until his death in 1802, found consolation with two women, by each of whom he had a family. The shock to Mary Berry was enduring, but she never blamed her lover, nor would allow anyone else to do so. "I still believe," she said, "that, had this separation never taken place, I should never have had to complain of him nor he to doubt me." Miss Kate Perry, in her *Reminiscences of a London Drawing-room*, related how her dear friend, Mary Berry, towards the end of her life, "one evening recounted the sad story of her engagement, so long ago in time, but fresh in her memory as if it were the tale of yesterday. She described her last interview with this fine-looking soldier, in the prime of his life, with such graphic power that his image seemed standing before us." Mary Berry sealed up the correspondence, and some eight-and-forty years after the engagement had been broken off, when she had passed the age of fourscore, she opened the packet and inserted the sad note that has been printed above.

Horace Walpole passed away in March 1797. To each of his sisters he left the sum of £4,000, and to them jointly, for their lives, the house and grounds and furniture of Strawberry Hill. He bequeathed his printed works and manuscripts to Robert Berry and his daughters, with discretionary powers to publish, Berry to be editor,

but all three to share in any monies that should accrue. As a matter of fact, however, it was Mary Berry, and not her father, who saw through the press the five-volume edition of Walpole's works, which appeared the year after his death.

The Berry sisters now settled down to a quiet, uneventful social life, which endured for more than half a century. Nothing more of romance came their way, except that a cousin, Robert Ferguson, fell in love with Agnes, who returned his affection, but, probably owing to his father's opposition, or, it may be, the lady's reluctance, the marriage did not take place. Mary Berry had a desire —it would be using too big a word to say passion—for letters. She published an annotated edition of the letters of Madame du Deffand, and wrote *Some Account of the Life of Rachel Wriothesley, Lady Russell.* She also brought out a more ambitious work, *England and France: A Comparative View of the Social Condition of both Countries.* She had, too, dramatic aspirations, and her comedy, *Fashionable Friends,* was in 1802 produced—and damned—at Drury Lane Theatre.

It was the Berry's *salon,* first at North Audley Street and later at No. 8 Curzon Street, that made them famous in society. To their little house everybody flocked. Mary was the star, and is to-day better remembered; but Agnes had her share in making the success of the informal gatherings. "I often think, in future years the *habitués* of Curzon Street will look back with that feeling of regret to the days which are no more which is common to all who survive their youth and middle age, and to that little drawing-room where, night after night, assembled the wit and beauty of London," Kate Perry has written. "It was no secret society which met there; it was informed that there was perfect freedom of speech,

and no fear of intruders. There was a freedom from *gêne* (one might say a comfort) which Miss Agnes said was her doing, from a talent she possessed of arranging chairs and sofas in the most extraordinary manner; in fact, there was a charm about these gatherings of friends, that hereafter we may say, 'There is no *salon* to compare to that of the Miss Berrys in Curzon Street.'" Literary and artistic folk mingled with political and social big-wigs. Among the frequenters were Henry Luttrell, now almost forgotten, though his *Advice to Julia* still repays perusal; Thomas Lawrence, Maria Edgeworth, Samuel Rogers, the Abercorns, the Glenbervies, the Keiths, the Rosslyns, Sir William Gell, Lady Charlotte Campbell, Brougham, William Windham, John William Ward, Professor Playfair, Sir Philip Francis, Lady Charlotte Lamb, the Mintos, the Aberdeens, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the Devonshires, the Carlisles, the Granvilles, Lord Colchester, Lord Dover, Lord Jeffrey, Richard Westmacott, the Duke of Sutherland, Sarah Austin, the Brookfields, the Carlyles, Sydney Smith, and Thackeray.

At last Agnes Berry's health began to give way. "Miss Agnes seemed more failing day by day; those who loved them still assembled in the little drawing-room to try and maintain its cheerfulness of old, but it was in vain; a shadow had fallen over the bright *salon*, and we all felt these charming reunions were drawing to an end," Kate Perry wrote in 1849. "We knew Miss Agnes could not be long with us, and Miss Berry felt this also, and, when alone with Jane Brookfield and me, continually spoke about her, but more as she remembered her in her youth —the pretty, charming girl with whom Gustavus Adolphus danced at one of his Court balls, and was admired and envied by the other ladies present. She

not only dwelt on her prettiness, but her graciousness and simplicity of manner, her talent for drawing, and of her delightful disposition, but then (with a touch of that self-estimation which belonged to her character) added, 'But she had not my intellectual powers, she could *not reason* so well'; then, perhaps feeling that these qualified remarks were unkindly, continued, 'But then she had *every charm* a woman ought to possess.' 'I can never forget,' she said with emotion, 'her lovable expression when she threw her arms round my neck and said, "Oh, Mary, the only shadow to my happiness in marrying Robert Ferguson is leaving you."' Then Miss Berry's voice faltered, recalling, no doubt, her own disappointment in love as well as her sister's. 'But it was destined that we should *never* be separated in life. Oh! now this parting is very terrible, after nearly ninety years of happy communion together; but it will not be for long, she has only gone one stage before me.' She ceased speaking, suddenly her eyes were full of tears, the first I had ever seen her shed, but the brave old lady tried to conceal them, and after a few minutes spoke on some indifferent subject."

Agnes Berry survived until January, 1852, and in these last years, though she could not be present at the reunions, she begged her friends to come as usual, as "it is less dull for poor Mary." Mary Berry followed her sister to the grave in the following November.

CHAPTER VII

LADIES-IN-WAITING: LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL (1775–1861). LADY ANNE HAMILTON (1776–1846). LADY CHARLOTTE LINDSAY

Diary relative to the Times of George the Fourth—It is bitterly attacked by Thackeray—Attributed to Lady Charlotte Campbell—Lady Charlotte's beauty—Her first marriage—She becomes a Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess of Wales—Her second marriage—Her taste for letters—Her several novels—Her friendship with Mary and Agnes Berry—Not responsible for the publication of the *Diary*—The indignation of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe—Lady Charlotte's liking for the Princess—Her loyalty—Lady Anne Hamilton—Another Lady-in-Waiting of the Princess—She supports her Royal Highness at the trial—Not very popular with the Princess—A *Secret History of the Court of England* wrongfully attributed to her—Lady Charlotte Lindsay a third Lady-in-Waiting—She gives favourable evidence at the trial.

In *The Times* of January 11, 1838, there is a review of *Love*, which novel is, according to the title-page, "By the authoress of *Flirtation*." The writer of the review, however, states that *Love* is the work of Lady Charlotte Bury. The same reviewer, in the same issue of *The Times*, deals with a *Diary relative to the Times of George the Fourth, interspersed with Original Letters from the late Queen Caroline and from various other Distinguished Persons*. This anonymous work, from internal evidence, was also attributed, and, as is now known, rightly attributed, to Lady Charlotte Bury (*née* Campbell).

"We may read this diary, and say, indeed, it is ridicule to bear a towering name, or to pretend to the old virtue which characterised it, or to the honour which formerly belonged to it. It is a ridicule indeed to come of a noble race, and uphold the well-known honour of

an ancient line. What matters it if you can read in your family record the history of a thousand years of loyalty and courage, of all that is noble in sentiment, honest and brave in action?—the pride of ancestors is a faded superstition—the emulation of them a needless folly. There is no need now to be loyal to your prince, or tender to his memory. Take his bounty while living, share his purse and his table, gain his confidence, and learn his secrets, flatter him, cringe to him, vow to him an unbounding fidelity—and, when he is dead, *write a diary and betray him.*"

The Times reviewer, who was none other than William Makepeace Thackeray, then in his twenty-eighth year and at the beginning of his literary career, had another smack at this book in a letter from Charles Yellowplush, Esq., to Oliver Yorke, Esq., which, under the title of "Skimmings from the 'Diary of George IV'" appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in March 1838:

> "And now, after this sublime passidge, as full of awfle reflections and pious sentyments as those of Mrs. Cole in the play, I shall only quot one little extrak more:
>
> "'All goes gloomily with the poor Princess Lady Charlotte Campbell told me she regrets not seeing all these curious personages; but she says, the more the Princess is forsaken, the more happy she is at having offered to attend her at this time. *This is very amiable in her* and cannot fail to be gratifying to the Princess.'
>
> "So it is—wery amiable, wery kind and considerate in her, indeed. Poor Princess! how lucky you was to find a frend who loved you for your own sake, and when all the rest of the wuld turned its back kep steady to you. As for beleaving that Lady Sharlot

had any hand in this book, Heaven forbid! she is all gratitude, pure gratitude, depend upon it. *She* would not go for to blacken her old frend and patron's carrickter, after having been so outragusly faithful to her? *she* wouldn't do it, at no price, depend upon it. How sorry she must be that others a'nt quite so squemish, and show up in this indesent way the follies of her kind, genrus, foolish bennyfactris."

This recalls the lines written about another indiscreet chronicler:

> For fifty years he listened at the door,
> And heard some secrets and invented more;
> These he wrote down, and statesmen, queens, and kings
> Were all degraded into common things.
>
> Though most have passed away, some still remain
> To whom such scandal gives a needless pain;
> And though they smile and say, "'Tis only Greville,"
> They wish him, Reeve and Longman at the devil.

Lady Charlotte Susan Maria Campbell, who was born in 1775, was the youngest child of John Campbell, fifth Duke of Argyll, by his wife, Elizabeth, the younger of the beautiful Gunning sisters, who had married, first, James Hamilton, sixth Duke of Hamilton. She inherited much of the beauty and charm of her mother, and kept her looks for many a long year. "Everybody admires the youngest daughter's person and understanding," Walpole wrote to the Misses Berry in 1791; and there is a note by Croker: "Thought by the best-judging of her contemporaries the most beautiful creature ever seen. I saw her in 1801, still magnificent, whole theatres turning round to look at her; but twenty years later she had grown coarse, and one of the most mortifying spectacles of dilapidated, but still pretentious beauty I could imagine."

At the age of twenty-one, Lady Charlotte married Colonel John Campbell (eldest son of Walter Campbell of Schawfield, by his first wife, Eleanor Kerr), who interested himself in politics and was for some time in the House of Commons as member for Ayr Burghs. The early years of her married life were spent at Edinburgh, but from 1803 they made their headquarters at Hartwell, in Buckinghamshire.

After his death in 1809, which left Lady Charlotte in uneasy financial circumstances, in order to provide for her nine children, she had to do something to increase her income, and regarded herself as happy in securing a post as Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess of Wales. It was, of course, during these years that she kept the notorious *Diary*.

To the deep regret of her friends, Lady Charlotte married secondly the Rev. Edward John Bury, Rector of Lichfield, Hampshire, a man fifteen years her junior, who had been tutor to her son. "I am afraid that at Florence the circumstances of Lady Charlotte's marriage, which has given so much disgust to her friends, must have considerably diminished your enjoyment," Professor John Playfair wrote to Mary Berry, in August 1818. "After all, it is an action on her part more unwise than wrong, and I think ought not to be visited with a continuance of indignation and reproach. It brings her down a step below the *heroic* level to which her conduct and her beauty (for this last had its full share in fixing our opinions) had raised her in the estimation of the world, but she still remains at a height much above the common run of men and women even of her own rank." Bury died in 1832, thus predeceasing his wife by nearly thirty years.

Lady Charlotte always had a taste for letters. In her

LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL
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teens she wrote verses, and when she was two-and-twenty she published anonymously a little volume, *Poems on Several Occasions*. In the thirties of the nineteenth century she wrote a number of novels, with such titles as *Self-Indulgence*, *Flirtation*, *Separation*, *The Exclusives*, *The Two Baronets*, and the like. They are all long since forgotten, but they had some vogue in their day, and she received as much as £200 for some of them.

She was fond of correspondence, and the following letter to Mary Berry may be given as an example of her style. It is dated Inveraray Castle, January 21, 1810, just before she took up her appointment as Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess of Wales.

"Dear Berrina,—I am quite grieved to think you thought it necessary to write to me because you had *intended* to do so. I feel sure of your regard, and do not require any *forms* to keep alive the steady and warm good will I entertain for you. In this mutual security of mutual kindness, no such ceremonies are necessary, and remember, tho' I hasten to answer your note, I do not mean to wheedle you into a correspondence. All I intend to do, is to *stir the Fire* of your Friendship by messages, and then, *when* we meet, have a care of your self, for I mean to set you in a perfect blaze. It is rather an awful thing to *write* to you, at all, considering *what you are*, and what you are engaged in, but I trust to my being Charlotte Maria Campbell to obtain some favor in your Sight whether it be on Paper, or in *Propria Persona*. I like your Account of my future Mistress and her agreeable dinners, and feel sure you will always say Amen, to a good-natured speech, at least about me.

"I hope I shall love Madame du Deffand more

than I do Mrs. Montagu—perhaps it is high treason to say so—but her Letters—Mrs. M's I mean—do not interest my Heart, and do you know that my Heart is composed of much better stuff than my Head, and consequently I always ask its leave what I ought to value.

"I never knew before that I could live in Complete Retirement and like it. I am much fonder of myself in Consequence than I ever was, and, like most people that live alone, I believe I shall grow disagreeable to others—this Egotism is a specimen of it. As to my Bairns I interest myself in every possible way about them, but when People talk of Children being Companions they either talk nonsense, or they talk of what they know nothing about, except in Theory. Children speak and act very differently in reality from what they do in Books of Education; and, as what we seek for in a companion is sympathy and a capability of comprehending, neither of these things can be found in children, neither can we find in them *Companions*, but nobody makes use of Appropriate Words, and one thing that would make the World go on much smoother would be the *perfect understanding* of our thoughts.

"I am sure you are weary of deciphering mine, and I know not by what right I intrude thus long upon your time, except that of being a Chatter Box. But believe me always, yours with much admiration and regard,

"Charlotte Maria Campbell."

As regards the publication of the *Diary*, more than one story has been told. Lady Charlotte's apologists assert that it was not her intention to give it to the public,

and that she was entirely innocent in the matter. Others have said that her second husband took the manuscript from her desk and disposed of it to a publisher. It is believed that John Galt, author of *The Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees*, who did a good deal of literary hack-work, was responsible for seeing the first two volumes of the *Diary* through the press. That he edited the third and fourth volumes, which appeared in 1859, there is no question, for he wrote the preface and an appendix of personal reminiscences.

The book has an historical and biographical value that cannot be gainsaid. It gives an intimate picture of the private, as well as the public, life of the Princess of Wales that is to be found nowhere else; but its immediate success arose from its indiscretions.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the antiquarian, whom Lady Charlotte had known well in her earlier days at Edinburgh, was highly indignant to find letters of his printed in the *Diary*. "I cannot express my vexation about the book you mention," he wrote. "In all my reading and experience I never knew anything of the kind. When I wrote the silly, impertinent letters in question, between twenty and thirty years ago, I knew that I was writing to the Duke of Argyll's daughter, and thought myself safe by all the common rules of good breeding and morality. But I find I was extremely deceived. I could say more on this head, but my gratitude gets the better of my spleen, for I am eternally bound to remember that Lady Charlotte Bury is Lady Wemyss' sister-in-law and Mr. Campbell's mother."

In this and other matters, since the *Diary* was published without her connivance, Lady Charlotte may well have been more sinned against than sinning. There

is no doubt that she was fond of the Princess of Wales, who for her part liked her very much, and was most confidential with her, and, when she was not in attendance, constantly corresponded with her, and consulted her about her many troubles.

"Dear Lady Charlotte," Her Royal Highness wrote to her in February 1813, "I fear you have thought me very unkind not to have written to you before this; but I have been so annoyed about my daughter, Princess Charlotte, I have not the power to tink of anything else. She was very unwell for some days, and, though I begged hard, the Regent and the old stony-hearted Queen would not let me see her. To tell you God's truth, I know not how long I shall be able to go on bearing all my sorrows. Come to me at Kensington on Tuesday next at three o'clock, and I will then tell you more; till then adieu. I will reserve all the rest of my budget for *vive voix*. My poor daughter wrote to me to tell me how she did herself every day, knowing the barbarity of those about her who would not let me go to her."

When, after the death of George III, Caroline returned to England, Lady Charlotte Bury stood stalwartly by Her Majesty, who, after the trial was over, wrote to her: "I assure you, my dear Lady Charlotte, no one's congratulations have been more welcome to me than yours. I do indeed feel thankful at having put my enemies to confusion, and received the justice my conduct and character deserved. *Mais hélas*, it comes too late, dear Lady Charlotte. Her who would have rejoiced with me at her mother's triumph is losset to me; but she is in a much better world than the present, and we shall soon meet, I trust, for, to tell you the truth, I cannot expect much comfort nowhere so long as I live. No one, in fact, to care for me; and this business has been

more cared as a political affair, than as the cause of a poor forlorn woman. *Mais n'importe!* I ought to be grateful; and I reflect on these proceedings with astonishment—*car ils sont vraiment merveilleux.* That I should have been saved out of the Philistines' hands is truly a miracle, considering the power of my enemies and their chiefs, for nothing was left undone that could be done to destroy my character for evermore. I could tell you someting—oh! *mein Gott!* some day I will—but I cannot write them. I feel very unwell, fatigued and *ébayé*, I wonder my head is not quite bewildered with all I have suffered—and it is not all over yet with me. That cruel personage will never let me have peace so long as I stay in this country; his *rancune* is boundless against me. I was sure you would rejoice at my glory, dear Lady Charlotte; no one has been more true to me than yourself at all times, and you have not wasted your interest on an ingrate, I assure you."

Another of the Ladies-in-Waiting of the Princess of Wales was Lady Anne Hamilton, eldest daughter of Archibald, ninth Duke of Hamilton, and a very loyal friend she proved herself. She remained by Caroline's side, undeterred by the persecution that assailed her royal mistress. She did not, indeed, accompany the Princess when she went abroad in 1813; but when her Royal Highness returned in 1820 as Queen, Lady Anne met her at Montbard, and returned with her, driving through London in the royal carriage. During the most anxious days of the trial Lady Anne, in her house in Portman Square, was her host; and, after the Pains and Penalties Bill had been withdrawn, Lady Anne it was who walked at Her Majesty's right hand in the procession to St. Paul's Cathedral to return thanks for her acquittal.

When the Queen died, Lady Anne went with the body to Brunswick, and was present at the obsequies.

The Princess respected Lady Anne, but did not altogether enjoy her society. "I have been busy all this week trying to make a match for Lady A. Hamilton," she wrote to Lady Charlotte Campbell. "I have set my heart on getting her married, somehow or other, to some man; she would be so much more agreeable if she was married; at present she is so full of old maid's whims and prudery, it is quite tiresome to be under her surveillance." The attempt was unsuccessful. "My *dragonne de virtue* has been sick for days," Caroline wrote later, "so I am in the utmost danger of being run away with by some of the enchanters who come to relieve locked up Princesses. No hopes of getting the *dragonne* married; no one will venture to espouse Joan of Arc. Dey are all afraid of de Amazon, and I am not much surprised." Caroline was not really ungrateful, but she did give voice to the irritation Lady Anne aroused in her.

"Lady Anne is *en petite santé* . . . just now; she is truly interesting, yet, as your song says, 'Nobody's coming to marry her,' nor, I fear, never will; so I and Joan shall live and die together, like two turtle doves, or rather like dem two foolish women, Lady Eleanor Butler and Mlle. Ponsonby, who must be mad, I should tink, to choose to leave the world and set up in a hermitage in Wales—*mais chacun à son goût*—it would not be mine," she wrote to Lady Charlotte Campbell in 1814. "My dear Lady Charlotte, I do dread being married to a lady friend. Men are tyrants, *mais* the women—heaven help us; they are *vrais* Neros over those they rule. No, no—give me my sweet Prince, rather than a female governess." Six years later she wrote of her Lady-in-Waiting in a more pleasant manner: "Poor Joan of Arc

has really proved herself true to the name I used to give her *pour me moquer d'elle*. She has stayed wid me through it all, and God he knows that was no small trial. Poor soul. I hope He will reward her for her courage."

In 1832 there appeared a *Secret History of the Court of England from the Accession of George III to the Death of George IV*, purported to be written by Lady Anne Hamilton. This caused her great annoyance, for she was in no wise responsible for the volume, which, indeed, had been written by a person whose name has not transpired, but who had gained her confidence and made notes of many conversations with her.

"Next month Lady Charlotte Lindsay will take de charge of my soul and body, which she always do well, and she is very witty and amuse me," the Princess of Wales wrote to Lady Charlotte Campbell of yet another of her Ladies-in-Waiting.

Lady Charlotte Lindsay, who was born in 1770, was the youngest daughter of that Earl of Guilford who is better known as Lord North, and a sister of Lady Catherine Anne, who married Lord Glenbervie. At the age of thirty she became the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. John Lindsay, son of James, fifth Earl of Balcarres, a brother of Lady Anne Barnard, the author of *Auld Robin Gray*. Some years later she became a member of the Princess's household, and accompanied her Royal Highness when she went abroad in 1814, but she could only stay away from England for a year or so. When Caroline was on her trial Lady Charlotte was called as a witness for the defence, and her testimony was of the greatest service.

"The witness of all witnesses has just closed her examination-in-chief, a Lady Charlotte Lindsay," Tom

Creevey wrote enthusiastically to Miss Ord. "In your life you never heard such testimony as hers in favour of the Queen—the talent, the perspicuity, the honesty of it." A severe cross-examination failed in any way to shake her testimony. "Wonders will never cease," Creevey wrote. "Upon my soul! this Queen must be innocent after all—Lady Charlotte went on in her cross-examination, and could never be touched, and though she was treated most infamously—so much so as to make her burst out a-crying. There was a ticklish point about a letter from her brother, who was in great distress, advising her to give up her place under the Queen, which letter she said she could not find. The fact is, her husband, Lindsay, who is in the greatest distress, has absolutely *sold* her correspondence on this subject to the Treasury. She told this to Brougham himself under the most solemn injunction of secrecy, and he has this instant told it to me. When, therefore, Brougham mentioned loudly the name of Maule as a person to be called as witness, the Chancellor decided the letter should not be produced—this Maule being the solicitor to the Treasury who bought the correspondence of Lindsay. Was there ever villainy equal to this?"

CHAPTER VIII

CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES : (II) GRASS-WIDOW

The Prince of Wales, Caroline, and Lady Jersey—Caroline dismisses Lady Jersey—Lady Jersey's insolent letter—The Prince returns to Mrs. Fitzherbert—Public avowal of the reconciliation—Caroline and Mrs. Fitzherbert—Caroline at Blackheath—She rarely goes to Court—The Queen's attitude towards her—Appointed Ranger of Greenwich Park—Her home for foundlings—The King and his affection for Princess Charlotte—The Prince's hostility to his Consort—"Monk" Lewis—An admirable hostess—Life at Blackheath—The Sapios—Mary Berry—Sir Walter Scott—John William Ward—Caroline's "unguarded" conduct—Sir John and Lady Douglas—Admiral Sir Sidney Smith—William Austin—"The Delicate Investigation"—Caroline declared innocent—Her indiscretions commented on—The King's point of view—*The Book* suppressed—Caroline goes to Court.

It would be paying Lady Jersey too high a compliment to say that she was the sole, or even the principal, cause of the separation between the Prince and Princess of Wales, but certainly she did her best to foment the trouble between them, for it seemed to her that by precipitating matters she would best serve her own ends.

His Royal Highness, it is not to be denied, vigorously backed his mistress whenever it came to a matter of openly insulting his consort. Charles Abbot (afterwards Lord Colchester) noted in his Diary, under the date of February 25, 1796 : "A few nights ago, Lady Jersey was invited with the Prince's party to the Queen's House, and put to a card-table with the Princess Augusta and Lady Holdernesse. The Prince of Wales, in the course of the evening, repeatedly came up to her table, and publicly squeezed her hand. The King sees and disapproves of the Carlton House system. The Queen

is won over to the Prince's wishes by his attention, and presents in jewels, etc.; the Princess says her father told her to observe everything and say nothing."

The same observer noted three weeks later: "The Queen openly patronised Lady Jersey. The Prince and Princess of Wales within these last three days have had an open difference, but at the Opera last night affected an extraordinary cordiality. The Princess of Wales in this matter behaved with dignity." Another disgraceful incident was the Prince taking back from Caroline some pearl bracelets he had given her as a wedding-present, and bestowing them on Lady Jersey, who had the temerity, as well as the bad taste, to wear them at Court in the presence of the Princess of Wales.

Caroline bore with these outrages for a while, and behaved with great dignity. She made no protests; only she declined absolutely to have Lady Jersey at her table, or, indeed, in her presence, except when the Prince was with her. Nothing that George said could move her from this resolve.

When the separation took place, however, the situation was changed. Then Caroline determined to have nothing more to do with Lady Jersey, and intimated the same to her. To the surprise and disgust of Her Royal Highness, Lady Jersey refused to resign her post of Lady of the Bedchamber. Caroline had put up with many slights and much overt rudeness, but this was too much for her, and she spoke her mind very plainly in a letter to George, in which she said that Lady Jersey's attempt to remain in her Household convicted her of an absolute lack of delicacy ("c'est announcer un manque absolu de délicatesse.")

As the Prince would not use his authority, Caroline appealed direct to the King, who at once intervened, and

intervened effectively, on her behalf. Lady Jersey was given the choice of resignation or dismissal.

Lady Jersey, seeing that the game was up, evidently consulted with the Prince as to the manner in which her resignation could be rendered most offensive to Caroline. The following letter was the outcome of this deliberation:

"Madame—I seize the earliest opportunity in my power to have the honour of informing your Royal Highness that I have this day obtained permission of His Royal Highness to resign into *his* hands the situation of Lady of the Bedchamber in your Royal Highness's Family, a situation which I had the honour of being appointed by *him* at the same time with the rest of those who compose your Royal Highness's Household.

"The same duty and attachment which I shall ever be proud to profess for his Royal Highness, and which induced me to accept that appointment, urged me to obey his commands in retaining it long after the infamous and unjustifiable paragraphs in the public papers rendered it impossible for a person of the rank and situation which I hold in this country (indeed for anyone possessing the honest pride and spirit of an English woman) to submit to hold a situation which was to make her the object of deep and designing calumny.[1]

"The Prince of Wales represented to me, upon my mentioning my earnest request to His Royal Highness for my instant resignation, that such a step would not only be regarded as confirmation of every absurd

[1] This refers to the scandal occasioned by the intercepting of a packet of letters written by Caroline to members of her family at Brunswick, for which Lady Jersey was believed to be responsible.

and abominable falsehood that had been so industriously fabricated for the present purpose, but that it would be further promoting the views of those who had been so wickedly labouring to injure His Royal Highness in the public mind, and through him to degrade the rest of the Royal Family. But the moment is now come when I can with propriety withdraw myself from such persecution and injustice, and the conscious satisfaction that I have *by my silence and forbearance* on *my* side given the strongest proof of my duty to the Royal Family and of that respectful attachment and gratitude to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, which can never end but with my life.

"I am, Madam, with all possible respect,

"Your Royal Highness's most humble servant,

"A. JERSEY."

The reason why the Prince of Wales was so insistent on separation from his Consort was, not his devotion to Lady Jersey (as that lady soon found out, no doubt, much to her surprise), but his desire to resume relations with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Lady Jersey had been entirely indifferent to the fact that the man with whom she had an intrigue was married. Mrs. Fitzherbert was a woman of a very different stamp. She would not even receive any overtures from the man she regarded as her husband so long as he was living, even nominally, with his Consort. In her eyes, George and Caroline were living in adultery. But if the Prince ever loved anyone, it was Maria Fitzherbert.

When he was very ill early in 1796, he signed a will in which is the following passage: "In this my last Will and Testament, I now bequeath, give and settle at my

death all my worldly property of every description, denomination and sort, personal and otherwise, to Maria Fitzherbert, my Wife, the Wife of my heart and soul, although by the laws of this country she could not avail herself publicly of that name. Still such she is in the eyes of Heaven, was, is, and ever will be in mine. And for the truth of which assertion I appeal to that gracious God Whom I have here invited to witness this, my last disposition of my property, etc., together with such explanations as are necessary for me to make to enable me to quit this life with a clear conscience, and even without a sigh, except at the thought of leaving her (and perhaps, too, without receiving the blessing of her forgiveness), who is my real and true Wife, and who is dearer to me, even a million times dearer to me, than the life I am going to resign."

George grew desperate when Mrs. Fitzherbert would not even answer his letters. Alternately he coaxed and threatened. Finally, she, being a devout Roman Catholic, went so far as to say she would appeal to Rome, but that if Rome would not sanction the reunion she would go, and remain, abroad. The Pope pronounced her to be the wife of the Prince of Wales according to the law of the Church, and stated that she was free to rejoin her husband, if he was truly penitent for his sins and sincere in his promise of amendment. That the Pope's decision had been invited was, of course, kept a profound secret; and, indeed, it would have wrought incalculable harm to the Prince had it become known that he had even passively been concerned in an appeal to His Holiness.

Even after this the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert did not openly renew their relations for a while, though they met in private. Very early in the beginning of 1800

they began to appear in public, to the surprise of some of their friends. "The affair of Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince of Wales becomes very incomprehensible; it is a fact that he meets her whenever he can, and a conversation ensues that takes them both out of the company," Lady Jerningham noted. "On Saturday, Lady Kenmare tells me, that Mrs. Fitzherbert, Mrs. Butler, and the Prince were in a high box all night in conversation; the Princess at the opera, and also Lady Jersey. I comprehend it no longer, for I had thought Mrs. Fitzherbert a woman of principle."

There was so much gossip that it was thought wise for Mrs. Fitzherbert, in June, to give a "public breakfast" at her house in Tilney Street "to meet His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." His Royal Highness made it known that he expected Mrs. Fitzherbert to be invited to any entertainment to which he was asked to go: if she was not so invited he himself stayed away.

Of course, one of Mrs. Fitzherbert's conditions was that all intercourse between the Prince and Lady Jersey should cease; but Lady Jersey was not prepared to efface herself, and there is in the *Jerningham Letters* mention of an incident that took place at this time at a party at the Duchess of Devonshire's house at Chiswick, at which Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince were present: "The Prince stood almost the whole time by his band, with Dr. Burney, ordering different pieces of music. Lady Jersey was coasting round the spot where he stood, with her daughters, Lady Anne Lambton and Lady Elizabeth Villiers (who has not yet been presented, and appears to be quite a girl). The Prince was quite annoyed with her, and eyed her askance; but she is resolved to plague him; she professes it to be her resolution."

Mrs. Fitzherbert told Lord Stourton that the next eight years were the happiest of her connection with the Prince. " She used to say," he has related, " that they were extremely poor, but as merry as crickets; and, as a proof of their poverty, she told me that once, on their returning to Brighton from London, they mustered their common means, and could not raise five pounds between them. Upon this, or some such occasion, she related to me, an old and faithful servant endeavoured to force them to accept sixty pounds which he said he had accumulated in the service of the best of masters and mistresses. She added, however, that even this period, the happiest of their lives, was much embittered by the numerous political difficulties which frequently surrounded the Prince."

Whatever his financial troubles, the Prince found money—or credit—for the continual enlargement of the Pavilion at Brighton. He was frequently there, and usually Mrs. Fitzherbert accompanied him to the watering-place, staying near by. Presently she built a mansion that was known as Steyne House, where His Royal Highness was a regular visitor, and was often to be seen on her balcony. Nearly every day they were to be seen walking together on The Steyne. Financial anxiety was removed, temporarily at least, in 1803, when the Prince's debts to the amount of £650,000 were discharged, and an increased income voted by Parliament.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was popular in Brighton, especially with those who knew her best; but the caricaturists found in her an excellent subject. There is a cartoon, " A Brighton Breakfast, or, Morning Comforts." Mrs. Fitzherbert, at breakfast, is pouring Hollands into a large tumbler, marked " Comfort," for Lady Lade, and saying, " Won't you take another comforter? We must

make haste; I expect Noodle here presently." Lady Lade, who takes brandy, says, "I think your comforters are bigger than my John's," John being Sir John Lade, her husband, and a great crony of the Prince. Another drawing was, "Birds of a Feather flock together; Diversions of Brighton." The Prince and Sir John are on the box of an open carriage, in which are seated Mrs. Fitzherbert and a Miss Snow. Sir John is lashing one of the four horses, and says to the Prince, "There, b——t it, don't you see? That's the Cut." Miss Snow says to Mrs. Fitzherbert, "Did Noodle bring your physic this morning?" To which she replies, "Oh, yes, he calls regularly every morning."

It is more pleasant to turn to a passage in a letter written by Thomas Creevey, who often went with his wife to the Pavilion. "We used to dine pretty punctually at six, the average number being sixteen," he wrote in 1805. "Mrs. Fitzherbert always dined there, and mostly one other lady—Lady Downshire very often, sometimes Lady Clare, or Lady Berkeley, or Mrs. Creevey. Mrs. Fitzherbert was a great card-player, and played every night. The Prince never touched a card, but was occupied in talking to his guests, and very much in listening to and giving directions to the band. At twelve o'clock punctually the band stopped, and sandwiches and wine and water were handed about, and shortly after the Prince made a bow, and we all dispersed."

Caroline, though she was bitter enough against Lady Jersey, had no unkind feeling towards Mrs. Fitzherbert. There must, however, have been something of cynicism underlying her remark: "I hope *my husband* will not feel *me* any impediment to the reconciliation he is so desirous for." On the other hand, she paid tribute to Mrs. Fitzherbert: "That is the Prince's true wife; she

is an excellent woman; it was a great pity for him he ever broke with her." On another occasion, "The only *faux pas*," she once said wittily, "that I have ever committed was my marriage with the husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert."

The first home of the Princess of Wales, after she left Carlton House, was Shrewsbury House, Blackheath, a few miles out of London. There she lived quietly, and, on the whole, not unhappily. She was not in the least distressed by the fact that the Queen and the Princesses did not come to see her, and she was herself rarely moved to go to Court.

More than once before the Prince went back to Mrs. Fitzherbert he invited Caroline to dine at Carlton House with a view to some half-hearted reconciliation, which might placate the King. In the first instance, she refused point-blank. In the second instance, she yielded in so far as to say that if His Royal Highness came to Blackheath she would receive him with the utmost civility, and would not allude to the disagreeablenesses and disagreements of earlier days, but that she would not go to Carlton House until she knew on what terms she was to go and to what the visit was intended to lead.

The Royal Family, with the exception of the King, did everything they could to make Caroline's lot more unhappy than it was. She was not permitted to have a house in London. When she asked for the appointment of a friend as one of her Ladies-in-Waiting, the only reply vouchsafed was the suggestion for the position of one known to dislike her. Nothing that mean malice could think of was spared her. On the rare occasions when she attended a drawing-room she could not be certain even of receiving from her Consort the slightest acknowledgment of her presence.

"I am in a state of rage, being just returned from a visit to the Queen, who received me in a most cavalier manner," she wrote to Lady Charlotte Campbell in 1810. "Luckily I restrained myself whilst in her august presence; but I could have abused her gloriously, so angrily did I feel at the old Begum. I will not submit again in a hurry to such a reception. She never asked me to sit down. Imagine such a piece of ridiculous pride! And when I asked after my poor uncle, and said I should like to see him, she made me for answer, 'The King is quite well, but he will not see you.' I replied, 'Madam, I shall ask His Majesty himself'; she said *noting*, but smiled her abominable smile of derision. Talking of Kings and Queens, I heard the other day from a lady who lives a great deal at Court and with courtiers that a most erroneous opinion is formed in general of the Princess Elizabeth. The good humour for which she has credit is only an outward show, and this is exemplified in her conduct to the poor Princess Amelia, who is dying—quite given over, though her decay may be slow and tedious. The Princess—— and Sophia are devoted to her; but the Princess Elizabeth treats her with the most cruel unkindness and ill-temper. So much for Court gossip! Everybody believes Princess Amelia is married to Mr. Fitzroy, and they say she has confessed her marriage to the King, who is miserable at the expected loss of his daughter, who is his favourite; and I do not wonder, for she always appeared to me to be the most amiable of the whole set. So she is destined to be taken away." Of all the members of the Royal Family only the King liked Caroline. He was indeed fond of her, and gave her at least some protection. In spite of the opposition of the Queen and his children, he decided to give some public recognition of the favour in which he held her, and

appointed her Ranger of Greenwich Park. She then removed from Shrewsbury House to Montagu House, near Charlton.

One of the principal pleasures that Caroline indulged in at Charlton was the founding and maintaining of a home for poor children. A very charming picture has been drawn of her in the rôle of adopted mother by Campe, author of *Travels in England*, who was taken by her over the institution. "It is not the young and hopeful Princess, her daughter, whom she educated, but eight or nine poor orphan children, to whom she had the condescension to supply the place of a mother," he wrote. "Her own was the child of the State, and, according to the constitution of the country, must not, alas! be educated by herself. These poor children, on the other hand, were boarded by her with honest people in the neighbourhood. She herself not only directed everything relative to their education and instruction, but went every day to converse with them, and thus contribute towards the formation of their infant minds. Never while I live shall I forget the charming, the affecting scene which I had the happiness of witnessing when the Princess was pleased to introduce me to her little foster-children. We were sitting at table; the Princess and her friends were at breakfast, but I, in the German fashion, was taking my dinner. The children appeared clothed in the cleanest, but, at the same time, in the simplest manner, just as the children of country people are in general dressed. They seemed perfectly ignorant of the high rank of their foster-mother, or rather not to comprehend it. The sight of a stranger somewhat abashed them; but their bashfulness soon wore off, and they appeared to be perfectly at home. Their dignified benefactress conversed with them in a lively, jocose, and truly

maternal manner. She called to her first one, then another, and another, and among the rest a little boy, five or six years old, who had a sore upon his face. Many a parent of too delicate nerves would not have been able to look at her own child in this state without an unpleasant sensation. Not so the royal mother of these orphans. She called the boy to her, gave him a biscuit, looked at his face to see whether it had got any better, and manifested no repugnance when the grateful infant pressed her hand to his bosom. What this wise royal instructress said to me on this occasion is too deeply impressed upon my memory to be erased.

" ' People find fault with me,' she said, ' for not doing more for these children after I have taken them under my care. I ought, in their opinion, to provide them with more elegant and costly clothes, and to keep masters of every kind for them, that they may later make a figure as persons of refined education. However, I only laugh at this censure, for I know what I am about. It is not my intention to raise these children into a rank superior to that in which they are placed ; in that rank I mean them to remain, and to become useful, virtuous, and happy members of society. The boys are destined to become expert seamen, and the girls skilful, sensible, industrious housewives—nothing more. I have them instructed in all that is really serviceable for either of these destinations, but everything else is totally excluded from the plan of education, which I have laid down for them. Those who are acquainted with the splendour of the higher classes, and have reflected upon it, will be well aware of the danger of taking children from the more happy condition of inferior rank for the purpose of raising them into the former, in spite of Providence and natural destination.' "

It was Caroline's love of children that brought about her first great trouble.

The King was devoted to his granddaughter, Charlotte, and it was round this little girl that a real fight took place. Caroline loved her little daughter, and tended her herself. When Charlotte was eight years old the Prince suddenly and unexpectedly claimed the right to educate her under his own eye. This came as a great shock to Caroline, and she made an impassioned appeal to the King. After much discussion, George III, taking into consideration the Prince's character, decided that he himself would be responsible, and to the great annoyance of his son, and the great regret of his daughter-in-law, installed the Princess Charlotte at Shrewsbury House with the Countess of Elgin as governess. He gave the Princess of Wales unconditional access to her daughter.

The Prince of Wales, whose bitterness towards his Consort never diminished, let it be known that he would not, except on formal occasions, receive at Carlton House those who visited his Consort.

For her part, however, Caroline received anyone she liked, indifferent as to whether he or she was in the Prince's set. "I have always considered it a noble contrast in the Princess's character, the liberal manner in which she always forgives her acquaintances and friends for paying court to 'The Great Mahomet,' as she calls him, and I have particularly admired the total absence of all prejudice which she displays by frequently being even partial to many of the Regent's cronies," her friend "Monk" Lewis declared. "Certainly she has not the justice done to her that is her due." Many years later, on the eve of his departure in 1815 for Jamaica, he wrote further: "The pleasant evenings I have spent at Kensington, Her Royal Highness's

hospitality, and the delightful assemblage of persons she had the good taste to congregate around her, will ever form the most agreeable reminiscences of my life."

In spite of the taboo of the Prince of Wales, Caroline found many loyal friends, who, risking the displeasure of His Royal Highness, or indifferent to it, came to Blackheath, and, later, to Kensington Palace. The Princess liked the opera and the theatre ; but, above all, she enjoyed talking with her intimates. She delighted to entertain her friends, and was a charming hostess. " I never saw any person, not royal or royal, who understood so well to perform the honours at their own table as the Princess ; she does it admirably, and makes more of her guests than anyone else ever did," Lady Charlotte Campbell said. One fault she certainly had. " The Princess prolonged her pleasures until they became pains," Lady Charlotte added. " No appetite for converse, no nerves, no love for any individual who might be present, could enable any person who was not royal (they are certainly gifted with supernatural strength) to sit for five or six hours at table, and keep vigil until morning light. Some one, I remember, present that night, ventured to hint that morning was at hand. ' Ah ! ' said the Princess, ' God, He knows when we may all meet again—to tell you God's truth, when I am happy and comfortable I could sit on for ever.' "

Amongst those whom Caroline gathered around her were " Monk " Lewis, Byron, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Samuel Rogers, Sydney Smith, Henry Luttrell, who liked her well enough to come to Blackheath " in spite of bad dinners and worse wine." William Windham visited her frequently, and among those he met there were Monsieur the Prince de Condé, the Duc de Bourbon, Lord Harrington, Lord Howick, Lord Henry Petty,

Lord Mount Edgecombe, Lord Petersham, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord Sheffield, Miss Cholmondeley, and the Princess's great favourite, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, a son of the Duke of Leinster. Charles James Fox gladly accepted her hospitality, and so did Dundas, Lord Hood, Charles Abbot, Canning, Lord and Lady Minto, and Lord Eldon. Royalty at her house was represented by the Duke of Gloucester ; and the King himself came from time to time, to the great annoyance of the other members of his family.

The Carlton House set were at pains to let it go forth that Blackheath was a hotbed of dissipation. The fact that it was nothing of the kind is evident for the reason that, had it been, the Prince would certainly have taken steps against Caroline without delay. Her Royal Highness was surrounded by spies, and, had there been anything of importance for them to retail, something would certainly have been heard of it. If, however, there was no vice, there was folly in plenty.

Caroline was a very proud woman, and did not wear her heart on her sleeve. Occasionally she would laugh a little ruefully, but it was only in her correspondence with Lady Charlotte Campbell that she lifted the veil. " If I had not been miraculously supported, I could not have outlived all I have done : there are moments when one is supernaturally helped," she once exclaimed to Lady Charlotte ; and, on another occasion, " To tell you God's truth, I have had as many vexations as most people ; but we must make up von's mind to enjoy de good, spite of de bad, and " (snapping her fingers) " I mind de last no more than dat."

She sometimes gave formal dinner-parties at Kensington Palace, a style of entertainment she particularly disliked, and sometimes her nerves betrayed her. " Last

night," she wrote to Lady Charlotte in 1810, " I gathered together, my dear, a room full of people, and when I did look round at them, I said to myself, '*A quoi bon* this dull assemblage of tiresome people' and it so happened that they were all ugly, and I longed to get them out of my sight, yet I could not send them away, having made them come. De fact is, I know not what to do. I am tired, or, rather, sad, because I have no grand *intérêt* to busy myself with. A Princess, and no Princess—a married woman, and no husband, or worse than none—never was there a poor devil in such a plight as I am. Lady Euphemia Stewart, that old *commère*, talked to me till I thought my ears would never be able to hear again. She thought I listened. Well, no matter. What think you I did? I dare say they all said I was mad. I sent them all away, ordered the carriages, and set off wid a chosen few to the play. The first one made me cry; and, strange to tell you, I felt a satisfaction in being able to weep. And den de second piece was a farce, and it make me laugh, so dat amusement compensated for the dullification of the first part of the night. Little Matthew Lewis came into this box; he affected to be sentimental; dat is always laughable in him, and I quizzed him. I do not think he enjoyed the fun."

For this poor lady there was always too much of " dullification."

To relieve the monotony Caroline, among other things. took under her direct patronage an Italian called Sapio, who had been music-master to the Queen of France, his wife, who has been described as " a very pleasant little person, and a good musician," and her son. Lady Charlotte Campbell, who had no liking for music, and an aristocratic contempt for musicians, was horrified. " Again I dined at Kensington Palace," so runs an entry

in her Diary. "No company except the Sapios, and I sat apart, and talked whenever we could hear one another speak; but the horrible din of their music hardly ever stopped the whole evening, except when it was interrupted by the disgusting nonsense of praise between the parties. Interest and low cunning excuse it from the low and servile; but really to hear her let herself down so as to sing pæans to the Fiddler's son, who is after all gone away from her! Lady—— and I both agreed it is more than human patience can bear, to witness such folly. The perpetual nonsense of the old buffoon, amounting often to impudence, crowns the whole."

A tribute to the Princess was paid by Mary Berry, and this is all the more welcome because, when she was first presented to Her Royal Highness, she described her as "such an over-dressed, bare-bosomed, painted eye-browed figure as one never saw," and, with a touch of malice foreign to her kindly nature, quoted George Robinson as saying, "The Princess of Wales is the only true friend the Prince of Wales has, as she goes about justifying his conduct." A couple of months later they met again when Caroline paid a visit to Strawberry Hill. "The Princess talked a great deal more than she looked at anything, and seemed pleased to have some people to talk to; the pictures, etc., of the house, and observations on them, came merely to fill up gaps and give new matter for discussion," Mary Berry noted in her Diary. "She was then in her very best manner, and her conversation is certainly uncommonly lively, odd, and clever. What a pity she has not a grain of *common* sense! not an ounce of ballast to prevent high spirits, and a coarse mind without any degree of moral taste, from running away with her, and allowing her to act indecorously and ridiculously whenever an occasion offers! Were she

always to conduct herself as she did here to-day she would merit the character of having not only a remarkably easy and gracious manner, but natural cleverness above any of her *peers* that I have seen ; and a good many have at different times fallen under my observation."

More enthusiastic was Sir Walter Scott, who went to see her whenever he visited London. "She was an enchanting Princess, who dwells in an enchanted palace," he wrote of her. "I cannot help thinking that her Prince must labour under some malignant spell when he denies himself her society." Scott was no fair-weather friend, as the following letter written by him to Joanna Baillie, from Edinburgh, in March 1813, shows conclusively : "I shall have to resist very flattering invitations this season ; for I have received hints, from more quarters than one, that my bow would be acceptable at Carlton House, in case I should be in London, which is very flattering, especially as there were some prejudices to be got over in that quarter. I should be in some danger of giving new offence too ; for, although I utterly disapprove of the present rash and ill-advised course of the Princess, yet, as she always was most kind and civil to me, I could not, as a gentleman, decline obeying any commands she might give me to wait upon her, especially in her present adversity. So, though I do not affect to say I should be sorry to take an opportunity of peeping at the splendours of Royalty, prudence and economy will keep me quietly at home until another day." This is all the more splendid because of the pang it must have given him, the most loyal of subjects, to absent himself from the Regent's presence. Royalty to him was something almost divine. When George IV paid a visit to Edinburgh, and, in a glass of his favourite tipple of cherry-brandy, drank Scott's health, the great novelist begged permission to

be allowed to keep the glass as a memento of the honour paid to him, put it in a tail-pocket—and presently sat down on it!

There were many parties at Blackheath, with much laughter, a good deal of dancing, plenty of music, and some rather boisterous fun. There was, however, no undue licence, and when John William Ward (afterwards Lord Dudley) made a rather free joke, he was, somewhat to his surprise, thereafter excluded from these gatherings. The Carlton House set, however, took it as its creed that life at Montagu House was just one round of dissipation, and that it was the scene of many an orgy.

It is not to be denied, however, that Caroline's manner was unfortunate. She endeavoured to enliven the monotony of her life by inviting persons whose high animal spirits and audacious pranks caused comment among more sober-minded people. Even her friend Lord Minto admitted sadly that prudence was totally wanting in her. "When her subject engages her," he admitted, "her eyes and countenance speak louder than many people could bawl at the top of their voices."

The Prince of Wales, who longed for an opportunity to rid himself of his Consort, and those who wished to ingratiate themselves with him, encouraged tale-bearing, and even had spies introduced among her servants, but with no result, even though Charles Abbot, Speaker of the House of Commons, declared privately in 1804 that, "The Princess of Wales gives great uneasiness by her unguarded conduct." There were rumours at this time that the Princess was to be impeached, but these must have emanated from the Prince's friends, where the wish was father to the thought.

Trouble, however, was not long in coming. To Blackheath in 1801 had come to reside Major-General Sir

John and Lady Douglas. Presently Admiral Sir Sidney Smith came to stay with them, and there were many witnesses that the relations between the sailor and his hostess were at least compromising. The good-natured Princess, passing the house, called on Lady Douglas, and in due course there resulted a certain intimacy, which lasted until the end of July 1803, when the Douglases went to Devonshire.

Through the doubtful medium of an anonymous letter, it now came to the knowledge of the Princess, firstly, that Lady Douglas had cast aspersions on her reputation, and, secondly, that Lady Douglas's own reputation was such that she should not be received by Her Royal Highness. Caroline, unwilling to believe bad about anyone, enquired into the matter, and, as a result, refused to receive the Douglases on their return to her neighbourhood.

There is little doubt but that the whole business arose out of Lady Douglas's jealousy of the attentions which Sir Sidney Smith showed to Her Royal Highness. The fact was that the Douglases were poor, the Admiral rich. He had brought his carriages and horses with him when he lived with them, and had also provided for his hosts many luxuries.

Lady Douglas, defeated in the first round, looked for another opening for attack. She persuaded her husband, who would appear to have been almost entirely under her domination, to make a statement to the Duke of Sussex, in whose Household he occupied a post, to the effect that the Princess of Wales had committed adultery and had, in 1804, given birth at Montagu House to a child, he of whom she had taken charge and who was known as William Austin. Of course, the Duke could not ignore such a charge, and, though he was not prejudiced against his sister-in-law, he thought it his duty

to inform the Prince of Wales of what Sir John had said. Here George saw his chance. He at once demanded a written statement, which the Douglases, perforce, had to provide—though, it may be assumed, they did so in fear and trembling. They were, in fact, as they now realised to their exceeding dismay, caught in their own mesh. There was, however, nothing for them but to bluff it out.

Some brief extracts from Lady Douglas's narrative (in the compilation of which they must have been assisted) it is necessary to give :

" The Princess of Wales told me, ' If she were discovered in bringing her son into the world, she would give the Prince of Wales the credit of it, for she had slept two nights in the year she was pregnant in Carlton House. . . . I thought you had completely found me out, and therefore I came to you, for you looked droll when I called for ale and fried onions and potatoes, and when I said I eat tongue and chicken at my breakfast ; that I was sure as my life you suspected me ; tell me honestly, did you not ? ' I affected not to understand the Princess at all, and did not really comprehend her. She then said, ' Well, I'll tell you ; I am with child, and the child came to life when I was breakfasting with Lady Willoughby. . . .'

" Upon my return to Blackheath in January I called to pay my duty. I found her Royal Highness packing a small black box, and an infant sleeping on a sofa, with a piece of scarlet cloth thrown over it. She appeared confused, and hesitated, whether she should be rude or kind, but, recovering herself, chose to be the latter, said she was happy to see me, and then, taking me by the hand, led me to the sofa, and, uncovering the child, said, ' Here is the little boy. I had him two days after I saw you last ; is it not a nice little child ? '

" Mrs. Fitzgerald sat down to tell me the whole fable of the child having been brought by a poor woman from Deptford, whose husband had left her ; that Mr. Stikeman, the page, had the honour of bringing it in, that it was a poor little ill-looking thing when first brought, but now, with such great care, was growing very pretty, and that as Her Royal Highness was so good, and had taken the twins (whose father would not let them remain) and taken this, all the poor people would be bringing children. The Princess now took the child up, and I was entertained the whole morning by seeing it fed, and *every service of every kind performed for it by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.*"

Clearly the matter could not be left to rest there. The Prince of Wales consulted those distinguished lawyers, Lord Thurlow and Sir Samuel Romilly ; but he did not evince any alacrity to do anything more until his legal advisers insisted that the statements must be laid before His Majesty. On May 29, 1806—many months after Douglas first brought the charges—the King ordered a Commission to enquire into the conduct of the Princess, with authority to examine witnesses on oath. This enquiry came to be known as " The Delicate Investigation."

It is not necessary to follow the proceedings in detail. How groundless were the accusations is shown by the statement of Sir Samuel Romilly, who may be taken as having held a watching brief at the beginning for the Princess of Wales. " The result of the examination," he said, " was such as left a perfect conviction on my mind, and I believe on the minds of the four Lords, that the boy in question was the son of Sophia Austin ; that he was born in Brownlow Hospital on July 11, 1804, and was taken by the Princess into her house on November

15, 1804, and has ever since been under her protection. Moreover, the evidence of all the servants as to the general conduct of the Princess of Wales was very favourable to Her Royal Highness; and Lady Douglas's account was contradicted in many very important particulars."

In the official report presented by the Commissioners to the King occurs the following passage:

"We are happy to declare to your Majesty our perfect conviction that there is no foundation for believing that the child now with the Princess is the child of Her Royal Highness, or that she was delivered of any child in the year 1802; nor has anything appeared to us which would warrant the belief that she was pregnant in that year, or at any other period within the compass of our enquiries. The identity of the child, now with the Princess, its parentage, the place and date of its birth, the time and circumstances of its being under Her Royal Highness's protection, are all established by such a concurrence both of positive and circumstantial evidence as can, in our judgment, leave no question on this part of the subject. That child was, beyond all doubt, born in the Brownlow Street hospital on the 11th day of July, 1802, of the body of Sophia Austin, and was first brought to the Princess's house in the month of November following. Neither should we be more warranted in expressing any doubt as to the alleged pregnancy of the Princess, as stated in the original declarations—a fact so fully contradicted, and by so many witnesses, to whom, if true, it must in various ways have been known, that we cannot think it entitled to the smallest credit. The testimony on these two points is contained in the annexed depositions and letters. We have not partially abstracted them in this report, lest, by an unintentional omission, we might weaken their effect; but we humbly

offer to your Majesty this our clear and unanimous judgment upon them, formed on full deliberation, and pronounced without hesitation on the result of the whole enquiry."

Had the Commissioners stopped here, the matter would have been at an end ; but they thought it necessary to comment on other aspects of the conduct of the Princess.

" We do not, however, feel ourselves at liberty, much as we should wish it, to close our report here. Besides the allegations of the pregnancy and delivery of the Princess, those declarations on the whole of which your Majesty has been pleased to command us to enquire and report, contain, as we have already remarked, other particulars respecting the conduct of her Royal Highness, such as must, especially considering her exalted rank and station, necessarily give occasion to very unfavourable interpretations. From the various depositions and proofs annexed to this report . . . your Majesty will perceive that several strong circumstances of this description have been positively sworn to by witnesses, who cannot, in our judgment, be suspected of any unfavourable bias, and whose veracity, in this respect, we have seen no ground to question. On the precise bearing and effects of the facts thus appearing it is not for us to decide ; these we submit to your Majesty's wisdom ; but we conceive it our duty to report on this part of the enquiry as distinctly as on the former facts ; that, as on the one hand, the facts of pregnancy and delivery are to our minds satisfactorily disproved, so, on the other hand, we think, that the circumstances to which we now refer, particularly those stated to have passed between Her Royal Highness and Captain Manby, must be credited till they receive some decisive contradiction ;

and, if true, are justly entitled to the most serious consideration."

As regards the main issue the report was a complete vindication of Caroline, and at the same time a tremendous indictment of the Douglases, who, in the considered opinion of the Cabinet, should be indicted for perjury.

It is not to be denied that the Princess had, to some extent, brought this trouble upon herself—though this is no excuse for Lady Douglas, the prime mover, who acted throughout with the utmost malice—for she delighted, even as might an impish child, in mystification. For instance, she would say, "I have nine children," and, after having confused her hearers, would explain: "It is true, upon my honour. That is to say, I take care of eight boys and a girl"—meaning those *protégés* of the institution about which Campe wrote.

Lady Charlotte Campbell, who knew her well, has told how Caroline loved to make people stare. She has recorded the following conversation: "Her Royal Highness said, 'Poor dear Willikin Austin, I am so sorry he is growing big, but I am determined to have *another* little boy; I must always have a child in the house. I lifted my eyes to her person; I really fancied I saw the full meaning of her words, but she met my glance with a steady composure which reassured me; for I thought no one could look so calm, so bold, were there anything to be ashamed of, and I replied, 'But, Madam, you have the same interest in Willikin that you ever had?' 'Oh, yes, to be sure; I love him dearly; but I must have a *little child*; he is growing too big, too much of a man!'"

The best thing that Caroline, who was by no means

devoid of wit, ever said was, when, at her invitation, one of her intimates told her about the gossip about William Austin : " They do say he is your Royal Highness's child." " Prove it," said the Princess, " and he shall be your King ! "

The Princess, having been cleared of the charges, was in no mind to let the matter rest. She wrote to the King and told him that, while the punishment of Sir John and Lady Douglas would afford her no satisfaction, she thought it was her due that her innocence should be proclaimed in the most public manner possible. In December 1806 His Majesty wrote that he was advised that " it is no longer necessary to decline receiving the Princess into the Royal Presence." He added, however, that in the examinations, and even in the answers drawn in the name of the Princess by her legal advisers, " there have appeared circumstances of conduct on the part of the Princess which His Majesty sees with concern and disapprobation," but the King with his own hand struck out the word " disapprobation," and substituted " serious concern."

The King named an early date when he would receive the Princess at Court. Then, when all seemed satisfactorily settled, the Prince of Wales announced his intention to re-open the matter—and the invitation to St. James's was temporarily cancelled. This was too much for Caroline, who at once declared indignantly that, " The publication of all these proceedings to the world then seems to me, under the present circumstances (whatever reluctance I feel against such a measure, and however I regret the hard necessity which drives me to it) to be almost the only remaining resource for the vindication of my honour and character."

The threat to publish her case caused consternation

in her enemies' camp. The *Book*, as it was called, was prepared by Spencer Perceval. It was actually printed and would undoubtedly have been issued; but at the last moment, in March, 1807, the Grenville Ministry retired, and was succeeded by the Portland Administration, in which were several of her friends, including Perceval, as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The new Government at once advised the King to receive the Princess, and to assign her apartments in a royal residence.

Caroline went to Court on May 7, and was given Kensington Palace for her London home, where, and at Blackheath, the King again visited her.

CHAPTER IX

LADY HERTFORD (1760–1834)

The Marchioness of Hertford—The second Marquis of Hertford—*Très grande dame*—A very handsome woman—The infatuation of the Prince of Wales—A "liaison of vanity"—His visits to Hertford House—Tom Moore's gibes—Mrs. Fitzherbert distressed by this *affaire*—Her relations with Lady Hertford—Mary Seymour—A threat—Mrs. Fitzherbert insulted by the Prince—They separate—Lady Hertford and Lady Conyngham.

EXACTLY when the Prince of Wales discovered that he was infatuated with Lady Hertford cannot be said, but it was probably about 1808 when the *affaire* became common knowledge.

Lady Hertford was the eldest daughter and co-heiress of Charles Ingram, ninth and last Viscount Irvine, and at the age of sixteen she had become the second wife of Lord Yarmouth, who in 1794, succeeded his father as (second) Marquis of Hertford.

Lady Hertford was *très grande dame*, very wealthy, very much respected, and, although not clever, very charming. She had, according to one of her contemporaries, melting eyes, dimpled mouth, youthful mien, and (whatever it may mean) reposeful curves of figure. Having, apparently, everything that the world could offer, it is not easy to see why she should have compromised herself with the Prince at the age of forty. It certainly could not enhance her social prestige; in fact, it detracted from it. The probable explanation is that she had a lust for power, and it pleased her to be able to issue her commands to the Heir-Apparent, who, for some years, anyhow, obeyed her implicitly.

"The Prince," Creevey wrote in 1811, "looked much happier and more unembarrassed than I have seen him for six years. This time five years ago, when he was first in love with Lady Hertford, I have seen the tears run down his cheeks at dinner, but now he has the weight of the Empire upon him, he is quite alive." As a matter of fact, historians of the Regency rather suggest that "the weight of the Empire" was a burden he bore very lightly—and carelessly.

Whether the relations between the Marchioness and the Prince were or were not platonic cannot be said—it is more than probable that they were. "It is only a liaison of vanity on her part with my better half," the Princess of Wales said to Lady Charlotte Campbell, laughing, "and it will not last long—she is too formal for him." However, as Wraxall put it, "that Lady Hertford does inspire passion, in some sense of the word, must be assumed from the empire which she maintains at this hour over the Regent, an empire depending, however, from the first moment of its origin, more on intellectual and moral endowments than on corporal qualities, and reposing principally on admiration or esteem." It may be assumed that the Marquis believed that the relations between his wife and the Prince were innocent. He held the office of Master of the Horse from 1804 until 1806, and in the following year was invested Knight of the Garter. In 1812 he accepted the post of Lord Chamberlain, which he held until the end of 1821, a few months before his death.

The world in general was, however, not unnaturally censorious, and food for scandal was given by the frequent visits of the Prince to Hertford House, Manchester Square, (where now is housed the famous Wallace

collection). It was to these visits that Tom Moore referred in the following lines:

Or who will repair
Unto Manchester Square
And see if the gentle *Marchesa* be there?
Go—bid her haste hither,
And let her bring with her
The newest No-Popery sermon that's going.[1]
Oh! let her come, with her dark tresses flowing,
All gentle and juvenile, curly and gay,
In the manner of Ackerman's Dresses for May.

Moore, who delighted to attack the Prince, again alluded to the affair in "Extracts from the Diary of a Politician."

Through Manchester Square took a canter just now—
Met the *old yellow chariot*, and made a low bow,
This I did, of course, thinking 'twas loyal and civil,
And got such a look, oh, 'twas black as the devil!
How unlucky—*incog.* he was travelling about,
And I, like a noodle, must go find him out!
Mem.—When next by the old yellow chariot I ride,
To remember there *is* nothing princely inside.

There is further mention of the matter by Moore in "A Letter from George, Prince of Wales, to the Earl of Yarmouth, the day after a dinner at Lord Hertford's":

Our next round of toasts was a fancy quite new,
For we drank—and you'll own was benevolent too—
To those well-meaning husbands, cits, parsons, or peers,
Whom we've any time honoured by kissing their dears:
This museum of wittols was comical rather,
Old Hertford gave Massey, and *I* gave your father.

Mrs. Fitzherbert had overlooked the numerous passing amours of the Prince of Wales, notably that with Lady Masserene, but the *affaire* with Lady Hertford, which was on a different plane, she could not, and would not, ignore. For a while she contented herself with protests,

[1] Lady Hertford was a strong opponent of Catholic Emancipation.

but no attention was paid to them, and the position, which was bad enough to begin with, soon became worse.

"Lady Hertford, anxious for the preservation of her own reputation, which she was not willing to compromise with the public, even when she ruled the Prince with the utmost sway, exposed Mrs. Fitzherbert at this time to very severe strains, which at last almost, as she said, ruined her health and destroyed her nerves," Langdale, the earliest biographer of Mrs. Fitzherbert, has written. "Attentions were required from her towards Lady Hertford herself, even when most aware of her superior influence over the Prince, and these were exhorted by the menace of taking away her child. To diminish her apparent influence in public as well as in private was now the object. When at Brighton, the Prince, who had passed part of his mornings with Mrs. Fitzherbert at her own house, did not even notice her in the slightest manner at the Pavilion on the same evening, and she afterwards understood that such attentions would have been reported to her rival. She was frequently on the point of that separation that afterwards took place, but was prevented by the influence of the Royal Family from carrying her resolution into effect."

The words in the above extract, "her child," call for explanation. This was not a daughter of Mrs. Fitzherbert, who had no children, but of Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour, fifth son of the first Marquis of Hertford and his wife, who had been Lady (Anne) Horatio Waldegrave, daughter of the Duchess of Gloucester by her first marriage to James, second Earl Waldegrave. Lord Hugh died in September 1801, and he was soon followed to the grave by his widow. The youngest daughter of this marriage, Mary Seymour, who was born in 1798, had been

placed in the custody of Mrs. Fitzherbert, on the understanding that, in the event of the death of the mother, she should act as guardian to the little girl. The trouble began owing to the fact that there was no mention of this in the will of Lord Hugh or that of Lady Horatio. The executors demanded the child, and, when their request was refused, a lawsuit was entered. Ultimately, owing to Mrs. Fitzherbert securing the intervention of Lord Hertford, she was allowed to retain custody of the child. Mary Seymour in 1825 married the Right Hon. G. L. Damer Dawson, and died in 1848.

The threat to take Mary Seymour from her roused Mrs. Fitzherbert to passionate anger, and she declared that, if any attempt were made to get possession of the girl, she would publicly announce her marriage to the Prince. This sufficed.

But the end of the connection between Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince was at hand. A fête was given at Carlton House in June 1811—it is said that the purpose was to celebrate the Regency, but this is almost incredible. Lord and Lady Hertford and their son, Lord Yarmouth, were invited to the royal table, but Mrs. Fitzherbert was not. She spoke to the Regent about it. "You know, madam, you have no place," he replied to her expostulations. "No, Sir," she replied with dignity, "but such as you choose to give me." This she regarded as the unpardonable affront, and, as the Regent persisted she could not be given precedence at his official Court, she absented herself from the fête. As, of course, the Princess of Wales was also not there, some wag remarked drily, "the two wives are sitting at home."

Shortly after a separation was arranged. Mrs. Fitzherbert insisted on the guardianship of Mary Seymour being made over to her absolutely. As regards money,

the Prince had long since granted to her as long as she lived an annuity of six thousand pounds a year, secured by a mortgage on the Brighton Pavilion, and now it was arranged that this amount should be extended to cover the full period of her life.

She never met George again, either during the Regency or when he was King. There is a curious story that on his deathbed George entrusted the Duke of Wellington that nothing should be taken from his body, and that he should be buried in the clothes he was wearing. When the King had passed away the Duke observed a black ribbon suspended from the neck, and found attached to it a locket containing a miniature of Mrs. Fitzherbert. The King had also preserved all Mrs. Fitzherbert's letters from 1785 to 1806.

When William came to the throne he offered to create Mrs. Fitzherbert a Duchess, but, "while appreciative of the offer," she declined it because "she had no desire to be another Duchess of Kendal." She did, however, not refuse the King's offer to grant her the use of the royal liveries, and, Raike says, she "kept a very handsome establishment in Tilney Street, and at Brighton, where the best society was always seen, every one without formality evincing that *nuance* of respect which tacitly acknowledged her elevated position, while the services of plate, the handsome dinners, and a numerous train of servants, all grown in her service, gave to the house at least a seigneurial if not a royal appearance." Greville, too, wrote kindly of her in the early spring of 1837. "Among the many old people who have been out in this severe weather, one of the most remarkable is Mrs. Fitzherbert, who died at Brighton at above eighty years of age. She was not a clever woman, but of a very noble spirit, disinterested, generous, honest, and affectionate,

greatly beloved by her friends and relations, popular in the world, and treated with uniform distinction and respect by the Royal Family."

Mrs. Fitzherbert was hospitable and very charitable; she was also very discreet. Indeed, Creevey said of her that she was "the best-hearted and most discreet being that ever was to be with a particle of talent." Even at the zenith of her power she never endeavoured to do a "job" or in any way to interfere in the political life of the country. Though she heard much of what was going on and was well acquainted with much secret history, no unguarded word ever passed her lips. As regards her own affairs, she was silence itself. Never, even under the greatest provocation, did she avow her marriage with George, who must more than once have trembled at what might happen had she done so. Instead, she contented herself with preserving only those papers that proved the marriage, and these she placed under seal in Coutts's Bank. The seals were not broken until 1905, when King Edward entrusted the documents to the late W. H. Wilkins, who based upon them his story of *Mrs. Fitzherbert and George the Fourth.* The papers are now in the private archives of Windsor Castle.

Mrs. Fitzherbert being, so to speak, deposed, Lady Hertford reigned in glory for some years, only, in turn to be succeeded in the royal favour by Lady Conyngham. Lady Hertford's indignation knew no bounds, though she was discreet enough as a general rule to say little; but when someone one day asked her if George had ever mentioned Lady Conyngham to her, "Intimately as I have known the King, and openly as he has always talked to me upon every subject," she said with the utmost hauteur, "he has never ventured to speak to me on that of his mistresses."

CHAPTER X

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES (1796–1817)

The Prince Regent's conduct towards Caroline—Princess Charlotte as a young girl—The Prince restricts her intercourse with her mother—Caroline protests vigorously—Colonel Desbrowe—Brougham advises Caroline—Her remonstrance to the Regent—Her remonstrance appears in the *Morning Chronicle*—The Regent's anger—A ministerial enquiry—Protest to Parliament—The Douglases denounced as perjurers—A "foul company"—The Duchess of Brunswick—The French Royalties—Caroline weary of the long struggle—A fête at Vauxhall—The Allied Sovereigns in London—The Queen refuses to receive Caroline at Court—A further protest to Parliament—Parliament votes Caroline an income—Charlotte engaged to the Prince of Orange—She refuses to live abroad—She runs away to her mother—The engagement broken off—The Regent secludes Charlotte—The Duke of Sussex raises the question in the House of Lords—The rigour of Charlotte's confinement mitigated—Caroline goes abroad—Charlotte marries Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg—She dies in childbirth.

"DAMN the west! and damn the east! and damn Wellington," the Prince of Wales cried, when one day at Carlton House somebody was talking of Wellington's victories in the South of Spain. "The question is, *how am I to get rid of this damned Princess of Wales?*"

George could not get rid of his Consort: all that he could do was to endeavour to distress her, and this he did to the best of his ability. His principal line of annoyance was to restrict the intercourse between her and the Princess Charlotte. During this struggle, on the one side were the Prince Regent, the Queen, and the Princesses—a formidable body; on the other side, Caroline and a few loyal friends. It looked as if it must be an easy victory for the Court party, and it must

indeed have so proved but for the fact that Princess Charlotte, when she grew up, took a hand in the fight.

In 1804, the King, as has been said, granted the Prince and Princess equal rights over their daughter. Princess Charlotte, however, was brought up in an establishment apart from her parents, at Shrewsbury House, Blackheath. There Caroline visited her; while the young girl was taken to see her mother at Montagu House close by. When Caroline was in residence at Kensington Palace, Charlotte used to come to her there twice a week.

Now, early in 1812, the Regent forbade mother and daughter to meet more than once a fortnight. This was regarded by both as intolerable, and they were determined not to endure such a restriction. Brougham, who was consulted, found Caroline very difficult to handle in this matter, and it required all his tact to prevent her from taking some drastic step that would bring about another conflict between herself and the Regent. He told her again and again that by law the care of the Princess Charlotte, as heir-presumptive to the throne, was entrusted to her father until she came of age, but he comforted her by adding that, although the Prince Regent had this power of control, yet, in his own interest, he would have to exercise it with due regard to the wisdom of Parliament and the sense of the country. At last his views prevailed.

There were certainly all the makings of a very pretty scandal at hand, if the only way to obtain redress was by appealing publicly to Parliament. This, certainly, the Prince Regent did not desire. He proposed to remove Lady de Clifford, Princess Charlotte's governess. "Lady de Clifford," Caroline wrote to Lady Charlotte Lindsay, "was to have been sent away, if she had not shown proper spirit in mentioning to the Regent that, if he

intended to send her away, Lord Albemarle and her son, Lord de Clifford, would ask an audience of the Regent to be acquainted with the reason for which Lady de Clifford was dismissed; for which reason, for the present, she is not moved. Charlotte is quite aware of it, and is perfectly determined to refuse any Governess whatever, as she knows that she is of age, and wishes to keep Lady de Clifford about her, either as Governess or Lady of the Bedchamber."

The fight now began in real earnest. Charlotte, who was at Lower Lodge, Windsor, was forbidden to visit her mother, so her mother announced her intention to go to her there. Colonel Disbrowe, the Vice-Chamberlain, was sent to the Princess to endeavour to stop her going. "I was just sitting in Lady Anne Hamilton's room, opposite to the sofa on which she was placed, when he was announced; she had never heard of his name and supposed that he was a young and fashionable *beau*," Caroline told Lady Charlotte Campbell. "She behaved like Joan of Arc in the whole of this business; was immovable; not a muscle of her face altered at the eloquent speech of this knight-errant. I desired him to write it down on paper, to refresh my memory now and then with it; but he refused. Lady Anne then took her pen, and, in the presence of this ambassador, she conveyed his message to paper, which he read himself before he left the room and took his departure. I think this scene will make a pretty figure in the *Morning Chronicle* or in the *Examiner*, but I leave that to a much abler pen than mine." The Princess said she would obey the request, not to go to Windsor, if her daughter came to see her as usual. As this was refused, Caroline went to Windsor on October 4, 1812, and saw the Queen, who referred her to the Prince Regent.

Brougham now drew up for the Princess a remonstrance in which she complained of her daughter being separated from her, and of her daughter being kept in close confinement. She was ably backed by Princess Charlotte, a high-spirited girl, now sixteen years of age. "I must tell you that the Princess Charlotte is extremely solicitous that her mother should be openly vindicated, and the Princess's wish for this proceeds almost as much from the desire of gratifying her as of punishing her husband," Brougham wrote to Lord Grey in November. "The young one is quite furious at *their* treatment of her. I mean Queen, Princesses, Dukes, and her father as much as any. She says she complained of her letters being opened at the post-office *by his orders*, which he denied circumstantially; and that she pressed him until she was obliged to stop, to avoid the unpleasant necessity of convicting him of a plain lie. This is her own story. As for the confinement at Windsor, she entertained a plan of escaping as soon as she was of age (for she conceives she is so next birthday—very falsely, in point of law). She also desired my advice on this and other matters, and I am to write a representation as strongly as possible against it." The first round went to "the young one," who, after a stormy scene with her father, was granted Warwick House, in the grounds of Carlton House, as a London residence.

On her seventeenth birthday Princess Charlotte was to have been presented at Court, and she insisted that her mother should make the presentation. The Queen and the Prince Regent, however, decided that the Duchess of York should be her sponsor. The Princess of Wales came to the drawing-room, but when the Princess Charlotte was informed of her father's decision, "Either my mother, or no one," she said, and, as she

could not be moved from this decision, the presentation was postponed.

The feeling on both sides grew more and more bitter. In January 1813 a strong protest by the Princess of Wales was sent to the Prince Regent on the subject of the separation between mother and daughter. This concluded correctly, but not, in the circumstances, unamusingly, "I am, Sir, with profound respect, and an attachment which nothing can alter, Your Royal Highness's Most devoted and most affectionate Consort, Cousin, and Subject, Caroline Amelia." Lord Liverpool and Lord Eldon, through whom the letter was sent, returned it unopened, stating that His Royal Highness had years before declared he would never receive any communication from his Consort, and that he adhered to that decision. It was sent again to the Ministers, with a covering note from Lady Charlotte Campbell, stating that the Princess of Wales was confident that they would not take upon themselves the responsibility of not communicating the letter to the Prince Regent, as it was inconceivable that Her Royal Highness should be the only subject in the kingdom whose petition was not permitted to reach the Throne. This communication, doubtless drafted by Brougham, did not make agreeable reading either to Lord Liverpool or Lord Eldon, who were far from desiring to be saddled with any responsibility in the matter, and who could see that there were serious dangers ahead. They promptly declared that they had "never declined to be the channel of any communication which the Princess of Wales might be pleased to inform them that Her Royal Highness was desirous of making to the Prince Regent through his confidential servants," that they had laid the letter before His Royal Highness, with whom the decision rested as to whether

he would receive it or not, and that they had his commands again to return it.

On the advice of Brougham, the original protest was sent to the *Morning Chronicle*, where it appeared on February 10, 1813.

The Prince Regent's retort was to cancel the permission he had given for the Princess Charlotte to visit her mother on the following day.

Now that the matter had been made public, it was evident to the members of the Government that some definite step must be taken. The Prince Regent had already asked the Cabinet to deal with the question of the regulation of the intercourse between Caroline and her daughter—that is to say, he meant them to justify his conduct. The Ministers were very anxious not to involve themselves, but they could not escape, since the education of the heir to the throne was a matter of State. Eventually a Committee was appointed, consisting of twenty-three Privy Councillors including twelve members of the Cabinet, four bishops, the same number of judges, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, Charles Abbot. For all practical purposes this enquiry was the investigation of 1805 over again. There was much controversy between the members of the Committee. Lord Eldon would not agree to any document that did not declare the Princess of Wales innocent; Lord Ellenborough would not subscribe to any document that did not declare her guilty. In the end, a report was drawn up advising the Prince Regent "that the intercourse between Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte should continue to be subject to regulation and restraint."

Thereupon, the Princess of Wales sent the

following letter to Lord Harrowby, President of the Council :

"*February* 27, 1813.

"The Princess of Wales has received reports from various quarters of certain proceedings lately held by His Majesty's Privy Council respecting Her Royal Highness ; and the Princess has felt persuaded that these reports must be unfounded, because she could not believe it possible that any resolution should be taken by that most honourable body in any respect affecting Her Royal Highness upon statements which she has had no opportunity of answering, explaining, or even seeing.

"The Princess still trusts that there is no truth in these rumours ; but she feels it due to herself to lose no time in protesting against any resolution affecting Her Royal Highness which may be so adopted.

"The noble and right honourable persons who are said to have been selected for these proceedings are too just to decide anything touching Her Royal Highness without affording her an opportunity of laying her case before them. The Princess has not had any power to choose the judges before whom any enquiry may be carried out ; but she is perfectly willing to have her whole conduct enquired into by the persons who may be selected by her accusers. The Princess only demands that she may be heard in defence or in explanation of her conduct, if it is attacked ; and that she should be either treated as innocent, or proved to be guilty."

Letters to the same effect were sent to the Lord Chancellor and to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Lord Eldon returned the letter, with a note that, by command of the Prince Regent, the visits of the Princess Charlotte to her mother were to be discontinued. The Speaker, however, held it to be his duty to read the letter to the House of Commons. That a Princess of Wales should find it necessary to appeal to Parliament that she should be " either treated as innocent, or proved to be guilty," created a profound impression throughout the country. The people showed their feeling by hooting the Queen when she appeared, and remaining silent when the Prince Regent drove through the streets; while the Princess of Wales and the Princess Charlotte were cheered to the echo whenever they showed themselves. There was a debate in Parliament at the beginning of March, and then Lord Castlereagh, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, denounced Sir John and Lady Douglas as perjurers. There was, for the moment, nothing more to be done or said. " The Ministers, or rather Lord Castlereagh and some of his colleagues," Sir Samuel Romilly said, " to save themselves from the disgrace which their factious conduct on this subject in 1807 must draw upon them whenever the papers shall be published, concur in acquitting the Princess of all blame, and consequently throw all the odium of the neglect she has experienced upon the Prince." So satisfied were the Princess's supporters that they abandoned their motive for an open enquiry. " The most complete defiance on the part of the Princess of Wales had been thrown out, in the presence of those persons who had the fullest opportunity of enquiry, and whose duty it was to enquire into every part of her conduct," said Samuel Whitbread. " So completely did she now appear acquitted of all impossible imputation of blame, even by the persons from whom the aspersions were, by the world, supposed,

in the last Report, to have been thrown upon her, that it is in my mind unnecessary to press the matter to a division. Her innocence is acknowledged entire—complete. To such restrictions as the Prince Regent, in his capacity of father of the Princess Charlotte, or by the advice of his Ministry, might think proper to impose upon her intercourse with her daughter she must submit. It is her lot. But she has the satisfaction of knowing that her reputation henceforth is, by the confession of all, without imputation or reproach."

The Princess of Wales said of the proceedings in the House of Commons that, though it was in some measure satisfactory, she was not yet satisfied. Whitbread gave notice in the House of Commons that two days later he would move for an Address to the Prince Regent praying His Royal Highness to order a prosecution for perjury to be instituted against Lady Douglas. He also stated that he had drafted a letter for the Princess in which she made " dignified submission " to His Royal Highness, *but*, he added, this letter had not been sent because it had come to his knowledge that the Prince Regent had yet on foot a further secret enquiry into the life and demeanour of the Princess since her arrival in this country, that Sir John Douglas was constantly at Carlton House in connection with this matter, and that the Solicitor to the Treasury and others were still endeavouring to collect evidence detrimental to Her Royal Highness. Whitbread challenged Lord Castlereagh to refute these statements, but the Minister made no reply in the House. Lord Castlereagh, however, went at once to the Prince Regent, and said that he would forthwith resign unless the secret enquiry was stopped once for all. The Douglases were seen no more at Carlton House; Sir John was dismissed from the Household of the

Duke of Sussex, and expelled from the Society of Freemasons.

The whole country now gave definite proof of its sympathy with the Princess of Wales. The City of London passed a resolution stating that it viewed with indignation and horror "the foul conspiracy against the honour and life of Her Royal Highness, and its admirations at her moderation, frankness, and magnanimity under the long persecution." Congratulatory addresses were voted by Corporations far and near.

The Prince Regent was furious, but impotent. All he could do was to continue his efforts to isolate his Consort. He had attempted—and failed—to drive a rift between Caroline and her mother, the Duchess of Brunswick. The Duke of Brunswick was mortally wounded at Jena, and his widow came in July of the following year (1807) to reside in London. The King, who had no liking for this sister of his, did not offer her a residence, as he might well have done, and so she rented a house at Blackheath, to be near her daughter, and another near Charing Cross. The Prince of Wales, seeing a chance to make mischief, sent word that he would call on her if he could be sure of finding her alone. To this she replied, very properly, that her daughter came at all hours, so that she was never sure of being alone. His Royal Highness did not call, but presently sent an invitation to Carlton House. The Duchess fell into the trap—at least, to the extent of sending an acceptance.

The old lady, who loved social gaiety, looked forward to the occasion, talked about it again and again to Caroline, who said never a word against it. All the same, she was very angry. "Was there ever such an idea entered a mother's head? It was so evidently a trap to inveigle her into a tacit condemnation of me,"

she said to Lady Charlotte Campbell; and later she remarked, "True, my moder behave ill to me several times, and did eat humble pie to the Queen, yet she only did so from cowardice; she was grown old; she was soon terrified, but she love me for all dat." The visit to Carlton House did not, however, take place, for the Duke of Brunswick pointed out to his mother the light in which it would appear.

Undeterred by this failure, the Prince Regent presently tried again. When the French Royalties were in England in the summer of 1811 the Princess invited them all to a breakfast, and all accepted. The Prince, hearing of this, brought pressure to bear on his guests, and, as Caroline wrote with humour, "Louis XVIII could only offer me the gout in one knee and in one toe, and Madame d'Angoulême a swelled face, so I have not been blessed with a sight of these charming creatures." Still, they sat down forty, though the hostess remarked, "The sight was not enchanting, as it was loaded with old fograms"—a favourite word of hers.

So weary was Caroline of the struggle that in the autumn of 1811 she made her home at Charlton her headquarters, and but rarely thereafter stayed at Kensington Palace. "There is no more society for me in England," she exclaimed to Lady Charlotte Campbell at this time. "Do you think, if Lady Harrowby and the Duchess of Beaufort and all that set were to come round to me now, that I would invite them to my intimacy? Never! They left me without a reason, as time-servers, and I never can wish for them back again. I am too proud for that. I do not say that, were they to be civil again, I would never ask them to a great dinner or a ball—that is quite another affair. *Mais vous sentez bien,* that to have them come on the intimate

footing they used to be on, coming every Sunday night, and all that sort of thing—never. No, I repeat it, so long as that man the Prince Regent lives, *les choses vont de mal en pire* for me—whoever comes in to serve him, even those calling themselves my friends, are just the same; they will set me aside, and worship the Regent."

It is not surprising, therefore, that shortly after she wrote: "The only astonishing news I can offer you is, that the Regent is dangerously ill; still, I am not sanguine enough to flatter myself that the period to all my troubles and misfortunes is yet come."

For Caroline to utter such words the iron must indeed have entered her soul.

Now and then, however, Caroline had her tit for tat. A fête at Vauxhall in celebration of the Battle of Vittoria was arranged for July 22, and it was announced that the Prince Regent would be present, and that among the royal ladies who would attend would be the Duchess of York. Thereupon the Princess of Wales announced her intention also to honour the fête. The Committee of Stewards were weak enough to say that all the tickets had been disposed of, but Lord Gwydyr overcame this difficulty. The Prince Regent was powerless in the matter, and, as Brougham anticipated, did not go. The Duke of Gloucester escorted Her Royal Highness round the walks, the Duke of Kent "handed her out, and her party supped at the Duke of Brunswick's." In short, as Lady Charlotte Lindsay said the next day, "nothing could be more right and proper, dull and fatiguing, than our last night's adventure."

Later in the year there were rumours of a further persecution of the Princess, but Brougham said—and said it where he knew that it would be repeated at Carlton House—"If she is attacked, she will be forced to bring

forward at last her case, which, as against the Prince, she has (with great difficulty) been persuaded to keep to herself."

The Prince Regent, in his mania to humiliate his Consort, was always creating trouble for himself. When in 1814 the Allied Sovereigns were coming to London after the proclamation of peace, it was announced that the Queen would hold two drawing-rooms. Caroline intimated that it was her intention to attend one of these. This produced the following letter :

"Windsor Castle,
"*May* 23, 1814.

"The Queen considers it to be her duty to lose no time in acquainting the Princess of Wales that she has received a communication from her son, the Prince Regent, in which he states that, Her Majesty's intention of holding two drawing-rooms in the ensuing month having been notified to the public, he must declare that he considers that his own presence at her Court cannot be dispensed with ; and that he desires it to be understood, for reasons of which he alone can be the judge, to be his fixed and unalterable determination *not to meet the Princess of Wales on any occasion, either in public or private.*

"The Queen is thus placed under the painful necessity of intimating to the Princess of Wales the impossibility of Her Majesty's receiving Her Royal Highness at the drawing-rooms.

"CHARLOTTE R."

Upon this Caroline again protested to the Speaker, and the correspondence was read in the House of Commons, whereupon Methuen moved "that an humble Address be

presented to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to pray His Royal Highness that he will be graciously pleased to acquaint this House, by whose advice His Royal Highness was induced to form the 'fixed and unalterable determination never to meet Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales upon any occasion, either in private or public,' as communicated by His Royal Highness to Her Majesty, together with the reasons submitted to His Royal Highness upon which such advice was founded." The matter was debated with heat on both sides, the Government the more warmly as they realised the weakness of their case.

As some token of sympathy the House, on the proposal of Lord Castlereagh, voted her an income of £35,000 a year. Pecuniary worries had hitherto been one of Caroline's troubles. Her expenses had been discharged at Carlton House, but, as the Princess was careless about money, this cumbersome method led to much bickering. So involved were her finances that a great banking-house actually refused her a loan of five hundred pounds, and on one occasion she actually had to ask Lady Charlotte Campbell to sell a piece of jewellery. "I found a pair of old earrings which the devil of a Queen once gifted me with," she wrote to her Lady-in-Waiting. "I truly believe that the sapphires are as false as her heart is, but the diamonds are good, and £50 or £80 would be very acceptable for them indeed." The parliamentary grant put an end to these sordid worries.

Meanwhile, there was trouble brewing in another quarter. In the spring of this year there had been announced the engagement of Princess Charlotte, who was now eighteen, to the Hereditary Prince of Orange. Charlotte, though she was indifferent enough to her intended husband, raised no objection; she was probably

pleased at the thought that she would be her own mistress after marriage. Soon, however, it came to her ears that, under the arrangements entered into by the Prince Regent, she would have to reside in Holland, the throne of which her future husband would one day ascend. This was so far from her liking that, in fact, she would have none of it. Was she not heir-presumptive to the British throne? she asked. And what was Holland compared to Britain? On April 16 she wrote to her father asking to see the marriage-contract, expressing her astonishment at not having heard anything of an establishment, and demanding that a clause should be inserted, if, indeed, that had not already been done, that she should not be taken from or kept out of England against her desire.

To this came the reply that neither the Princess nor the Hereditary Prince had any right to see the marriage-contract, which had been arranged between the Prince Regent and the King of Holland. She was told, however, that £50,000 a year would be settled on her; that her eldest son, as a future sovereign of England, would be sent to this country at the age of three or four; and that her second son would in the course of nature be King of Holland, and would be brought up there. To a girl of Charlotte's strength of character this tone was worse than useless. It aroused the fighting spirit which she had inherited from her mother. At once she declared that the engagement must be broken off, for she was resolved not to live abroad. Neither threats nor coaxing would induce her to alter her decision. The Duke of York was sent to "reason" with her, and so was Sir Henry Halford. Their efforts were in vain.

Then William Adam, Chancellor of the Duchy of Cornwall, came from Carlton House, and, in the course of an interview presumably he lost his temper, for he

was so ill-advised as to say that after she had received presents and made a promise she could be compelled to marry the Prince of Orange. Charlotte, who had been well advised and was an intelligent girl, looked innocent, and, expressing her ignorance of the law, asked—so that she might make no mistake—Adam to put this opinion in writing, so that she could submit it to Brougham. It is needless to say that the opinion was not put into writing.

As a last resource the Hereditary Prince was sent for from Holland, but this availed nothing. In the presence of Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Princess Charlotte told the Prince that she would not marry him unless the clause was inserted by which she could remain in England at will.

The reason underlying the Prince Regent's attitude was that he was jealous of his daughter almost to insanity, and he would have gone to any lengths to get her out of England—keep her out of England. When he found himself defeated his rage knew no bounds. He himself came on July 12 to Warwick House to tell Charlotte that she would be confined for five days at Carlton House, and then go to Cranbourne House, in Windsor Forest, where no one would visit her except the Queen.

The Princess Charlotte said little or nothing in reply, but in the evening she slipped out of Warwick House, hailed a hackney-coach, and drove to Connaught House, which was now her mother's town residence. Caroline was at Charlton, and a messenger was sent to ask her to come immediately to town. This, of course, she did, accompanied by Lady Charlotte Lindsay. Brougham was summoned, and he, in his turn, asked the Duke of Sussex, who was fond of his niece, to join them. The flight was soon discovered, and the news conveyed to the

Prince Regent. Then from Carlton House in rapid succession came the Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Salisbury, Lord Ellenborough, and others. In vain they begged Charlotte to return, and it was only when Brougham told her it was her duty to do so that she consented. "Look here, Madam," he said, taking her to a window that overlooked the park, "in a few hours all the streets and the park, now empty, will be crowded with tens of thousands." (The election of Cochrane, after his expulsion, was to take place that day, and there was certain to be great excitement). "I have only to take you to this window, and show you to the multitude, and tell them your grievances, and they will all rise in your behalf. The commotion will be excessive; Carlton House will be attacked—perhaps pulled down; the soldiers will be ordered out; blood will be shed; and if Your Royal Highness were to live a hundred years it would never be forgotten that your running away from your father's house was the cause of the mischief; and you may depend upon it, such is the English people's horror of bloodshed, you never would get over it." When at last she agreed to follow Brougham's counsel she insisted that a Minute should be drawn up to the effect that she was resolved not to marry the Hereditary Prince of Orange, that any announcement of such a marriage would be against her will and without her consent, and that if any such announcement was made this Minute should at once be made public. Having thus safeguarded herself in so far as she could, she then drove with the Duke of York, who had by this time come upon the scene, to Carlton House.

The Prince Regent carried out his threats, and for a while made the life of his daughter almost unbearable. She was to all intents and purposes imprisoned at Carlton

House. Even her correspondence was intercepted. She contrived, however, to send to her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, a letter complaining of the strictness of her confinement. He, thereupon, in writing, demanded permission to see his niece, but the Prime Minister replied: "The Prince Regent has seen the letter, but has no commands." Upon receiving this answer the Duke made one of his unaccustomed appearances in the House of Lords and put the following question:

"Whether, since the removal of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte to Carlton House, Her Royal Highness has been allowed communication with her friends and connections, which she previously enjoyed? Whether Princess Charlotte, since her going to Carlton House, has been permitted the free exercise of her pen, and to communicate without let or control with whatever friend she may choose to write to; and has been given the same liberty of using and disposing her papers according to her own inclination as she had while residing at Warwick House? Whether Her Royal Highness had been allowed the same personal freedom which she had before coming to Carlton House, and such as people, not in confinement, are used to? Whether the same advice with regard to sea-bathing was given to Her Royal Highness in the course of the last year which was suggested in the present? Whether Her Royal Highness, having exceeded by a half-year the eighteenth year of her age (the period after which Parliament has acknowledged the fitness of members of the Royal Family to preside over the Government of the country), there is any intention of making for Her Royal Highness such a provision as might enable her to mix with the high ranks of the land, she that is destined to possess a situation of the first

eminence and power which the Constitution of Great Britain recognises."

To this Lord Liverpool answered: "The Prince Regent has his daughter's benefit, interest, and advantage in view in his conduct towards her."

The Prince Regent was furious with his brother; but he had the good sense to send the Princess Charlotte to Cranbourne Lodge, Windsor, where the vigour of the confinement was somewhat mitigated. "I saw Princess Charlotte on Saturday, two days before I set out; she seems much more calm and resigned to her prison at Cranbourne Lodge than I expected," the Princess of Wales wrote. "She is to go afterwards to the seaside. Warwick House is to be demolished, and a new wing built to Carlton House; and the Regent is to remove to the Duke of Cumberland's apartments in St. James's Palace."

The Princess of Wales had delayed her departure so as to be at hand during the trouble between the Prince Regent and Princess Charlotte. Now that this affair had been more or less settled there was nothing to detain her, and she announced her intention to depart. At the last moment, however, it seemed as if there would be a hitch, for a rumour was reported to her that after her departure the Prince Regent would institute proceedings for divorce.

However, Canning was able to reassure her. "The alarm suggested by Her Royal Highness's friends appear to Lord Liverpool to be highly visionary. No proceeding for a divorce could be instituted in Parliament on behalf of the Prince Regent on any other ground than such as would form a foundation for such a proceeding in the case of any subject of the realm. Her Royal Highness will therefore be as safe from any such danger abroad

as at home, and there is no power to prevent her from returning to this country whenever she may think it necessary. Nor is any condition imposed, or attempted to be imposed, on Her Royal Highness to limit the exercise of her own discretion in that respect."

The Princess of Wales left for the continent on August 6, 1814, not to return again until she became Queen. Her parting wish was characteristic, and indicated that there was still, after all these years of incessant persecution, plenty of fight left in her. "The Princess hopes, that when she had left England, the Prince Regent will make public his conviction that her conduct and character have not merited reproach," she wrote to him, "and thereby regain the popularity that is due to him on the part of his noble nation."

Just before Caroline left England the second Prince of Orange arrived. "He is the same age as my daughter," she wrote to Lady Charlotte Campbell, "and I should not be much surprised that this marriage would take place soon, as Princess Charlotte would certainly not be under the necessity to leave her native country, he being not the successor, only the second son." This, however, was not to be.

The Princess Charlotte had set her heart on Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and would not entertain the idea of any other suitor. "No one," she said to the Duke of York at a ball at Carlton House, "prepossesses me so much as Leopold." It was also in his favour that, being a younger son of a minor house, in the event of her marrying him the question of her living abroad would not be revived. Eventually the Prince Regent gave his consent to this alliance. The public announcement was made in March 1816, and Parliament granted an income

of £60,000 a year, and a sum of £60,000 for outfit, jewels, and the furnishing of a house. Leopold had only a few hundreds a year of his own; and when during the marriage ceremony he said, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," the humour of the situation appealed so forcibly to the bride that she roared with laughter.

The marriage took place on May 2, and the honeymoon was spent at Oatlands Park, the seat of the Duke and Duchess of York. Presently the young couple bought the estate of Claremont, near Esher, where they settled down to a quiet, retired, and happy life. There was much excitement when it was known that Princess Charlotte was with child. On November 5, 1817, she was delivered of a still-born boy. Shortly after midnight the mother was dead. "I have not only to lament an ever-beloved child, but one most warmly attached friend, and the only one I had in England!" Caroline, on hearing the sad tidings, wrote to Lady Charlotte Campbell. "But she is only gone before. I have her not losset—and I now trust we shall soon meet in a much better world than the present one."

CHAPTER XI

MARIA FAGNIANI ("MIE-MIE") (1771–1856)

The Earl of Yarmouth—The relation between his mother, Lady Hertford, and the Prince—"Royal Stripes"—Thackeray's Lord Steyne—Disraeli's Lord Monmouth—Maria Fagniani—Her three fathers—The Marquis Fagniani, Lord March, and George Selwyn—Selwyn's love for "Mie-Mie"—Her childhood—Marries Lord Yarmouth—Their son—Lady Yarmouth and Marshal Androche—A second son—Death.

THE only son of the second Marquis of Hertford by his second wife, the Earl of Yarmouth, did not show any annoyance at the intimate relations between his mother and the Prince of Wales.

Yarmouth, though fifteen years his junior, was an intimate of the Prince, and for some years they were much together, but they ended by quarrelling. The story goes that one day His Royal Highness endeavoured to kiss Lady Yarmouth, and that her husband then and there so soundly thrashed him that he had to keep to his apartments under the pretext of a sprained ankle. George Cruikshank found in this an admirable subject for a caricature, and that most disrespectful of lampoonists, Peter Pindar, wrote some now unprintable verses, "Royal Stripes; or, a Kick from Yarmouth to Wales, with the Particulars of an Expedition to Oatlands, and the Sprained Ankle," of which, however, "the moral" can be given:

> Ye Princes, as you love your lives,
> Ne'er meddle with your *neighbours' wives*,
> But keep your brittle hearts from tripping:
> Lest some rude *Lord*, to scare beholders,
> Should compliment your princely shoulders,
> With such another *royal* whipping.

So let us sing, Long live the King,
The Regent, long live he:
And when again he gets a sprain,
May I be there to see.

Yarmouth, who, because of his rubicund whiskers, hair, and face, was universally known as "Red Herrings" or "Bloaters," himself was a *roué* of the worst type, and he has in that capacity been immortalised by more than one author, and his name has become a household word. Thackeray introduced him in *Vanity Fair* as Lord Steyne, and gives a description of him: "Lord Steyne's shining bald head was fringed with red hair. He had thick bushy eyebrows, with little, twinkling, bloodshot eyes, surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. His jaw was underhung, and, when he laughed, two white buck-teeth protruded themselves, and glistened savagely in the midst of the grin." Lord Yarmouth was also the prototype of Lord Monmouth in Disraeli's *Coningsby*, and there we are told he was "in height above the middle size, but somewhat portly and corpulent. His countenance was strongly marked, sagacity on the brow, sensuality on the mouth and jaw. His large, deep blue eye, morbid yet piercing, showed that the secretions of his brain were apportioned, half to voluptuousness, half to common sense. But his general mien was truly grand; full of a natural nobility, of which no one was more sensible." Yet another writer, John Mills, in his now forgotten satire, *D'Horsay; or, The Follies of the Day*, speaks of him as "a man without one redeeming quality in the multitude of his glaring, damning vices," and as "the debauched sensualist, the heartless *roué*, the gamester—he who never evinced a latent spark of virtue among his glaring vices, revelling in crime even in his impotent old age and dotage." In

spite of his excesses, however, he lived to the age of sixty-five. The excuse for his licentiousness is to be found in the statement of the doctor who attended him in his last years: "The brain of the late Marquis of Hertford was a diseased brain, and had long been so; the partial paralysis, speechlessness, and other long-standing direct cerebral symptoms demonstrate it."

Lord Yarmouth, in 1792, married Maria Fagniani, then in her twenty-first year—the "Mie-Mie" of George Selwyn's letters. Never, it has been said, did a lady have so many fathers, or derive so much benefit from them. First of all, there was the Marquis Fagniani, the husband of her mother, who never disavowed the paternity; and then there was Lord March (afterwards fourth Duke of Queensberry, and known familiarly as "Old Q"), and George Selwyn. The two last had been lovers of the Marquise at the same time, and to the end each regarded Maria as his daughter. Selwyn left her £20,000, and cynically appointed "Old Q" as trustee; while the latter bequeathed to her five times that amount.

The history of the struggle for the custody of Mie-Mie as a child is an interesting story.

The principal authority for the early years of Maria Fagniani is the correspondence of George Selwyn. In that collection the first reference to her is contained in a letter to Lord Carlisle, dated July 23, 1774, in which Selwyn relates how he was sitting on the steps of Lord March's house "with the little girl on my lap." She was then three years old, and Selwyn fifty-five.

It was about this time that he made his will. "The experience which I have had in other families of the consequences of these delays determined me to lose no time in settling, for my dear Mie-Mie, that which may be the only thing done for her, and only because we

may do it any day in the week," he wrote. "But I thank God I've secured, as much as anything of that nature can be secured, what will be, I hope, a very comfortable resource for her. I am egregiously deceived if it will not. As for other things, I must hope for the best. It makes me very serious when I think of it, because my affection and anxiety for her are beyond conception." It is always well in these matters to take time by the forelock, but, as a matter of fact, Selwyn lived another seventeen years.

Selwyn was entirely wrapped up in the child. When he is away for a day he is delighted to hear that "little Mie-Mie is impatient to see me again." Now he refuses an invitation to dine out, because she is at home. If he does pay a visit, she comes "to fetch me on the other side of Black Friars Bridge, in my coach." She has a headache, and "I stayed at home all day, as I was hoping to comfort myself with my dear little Mie-Mie, and she was, and has been to-day, so much out of order that my head is full of the measles." Happily she was a strong child, and seems to have enjoyed good health. He secured Gainsborough to paint her portrait. He personally supervised her education. Again, in August 1715: "The town grows every day emptier, and I am afraid to leave it and leave Mie-Mie in it." In September he took her with him to Richmond. "I am here with Mie-Mie, and shall be so for ten or twelve days longer, and then, the weather being cool and the days grown short, I shall find the evenings too tedious to myself and not very beneficial to her, which would undoubtedly be with me the first consideration."

In fact, Selwyn, with his new toy, made himself an unmitigated nuisance to his friends. At the age of four he took Mie-Mie to a party given by Mrs. Crawford

for Lady Cowper, Lady Harrington, Lady H. Vernon, and others, and she was allowed to sit up until nine o'clock. "She wanted to see 'an sambelly,' as she calls it, and was mightily pleased." Selwyn was glad to leave Richmond, but happy "that Mie-Mie justifies by her looks the advice I gave, and the importunity I used to procure leave for bringing her with me. The child has a look of health and freshness, and an *embonpoint* which she has never had till now. So I hope another year to find a country house for the same purpose, without the inconvenience to which I am by the neighbourhood exposed."

Selwyn could not bear to be separated from the little girl—a fact of which the level-headed Fagnianis were quick to take advantage. If Selwyn wanted to adopt the child, well, they decided, he must pay for his whistle—and there is reason to believe that he paid, and paid heavily.

"I wrote to you this morning, as I hope that you will know," Selwyn wrote sadly to Lord Carlisle from Paris, in April 1779. "This afternoon I find *tous mes projets pour le présent sont suspendus*. I am obliged to set out for Lyons. It is so unexpected that it is very much the greatest *embarras* I ever felt, and a monstrous exercise of expense to me. But Mie-Mie will be there to-morrow. *Les parents ont changé d'avis*, and I must go to Lyons to fetch her. God knows how much farther I would go to conduct her safely, but I was made to believe there was no occasion for it. I expected her here on Friday next or on this day sennight. . . . *Ma patience et ma persévérance sont inépuisables sur ce qui regarde Mie-Mie. Je me croyais tranquillement établi ici. J'aurai des entretiens avec la mère*, the Marchioness Fagniani, *qui ne sont pas toujours composés avec du miel! Hélas! rende-mi, figlia mia!*"

The Fagnianis were clever enough to keep Selwyn dangling, and this they did effectively for a long time—no doubt to their ultimate considerable profit.

"From Milan things are well," he reported to Lord Carlisle in January 1781, "at least no menaces from thence of any sort, and I am assured, by one who is the most intimate friend of the Emperor's Minister there, that he was much more likely to approve than to disapprove of Mie-Mie being with me, knowing as he does the turn and character of the mother." There is further mention of her in another letter to the same correspondent, written a few weeks later: "Mie-Mie goes on well, and improves, and I am, as I always have been, much too happy with her, but not one word comes to me from her Italian parents, and the silence is terrible to me, because it is so unnatural. Could I have assurance that it proceeded from a total abandoning her to my care, I should be happy, but that seems incredible, and so I live in a constant dread of some change in that in which now all my happiness is placed."

When Mie-Mie was ten years old Selwyn took her to dinner at the houses of Lord Boston and other of his friends. She went with him to the opera to see Vestris dance more than once. "Mie-Mie was *enchantée*, and so I was satisfied," he told Lord Carlisle ecstatically. "I intend to treat her to one more opera before the close of them, for she prefers them to a play, but which she has, however, never seen, except at Brighthelmstone, when she could have no idea of it." A month or two later, however, she was to see a play. "Lady Crawford carried Mie-Mie last night, with two of her own daughters, to the play. It was her first play, and so she was entertained. It was *Dissipation*, and *Robinson Crusoe* the farce; two such performances and performers I never saw."

And so it went on indefinitely. Selwyn lived only for his charge. "I have given up every thought of satisfaction to myself, but the care of Mie-Mie," he said when she was eleven. He taught her French himself, he supervised her drawing-lessons, and saw to it she was instructed in all accomplishments. This occupied his time and mind during the remaining years of his life. He died in January 1791, at the age of seventy-one, when Mie-Mie was in her twenty-first year.

The Marquis Fagniani had already passed away, but his widow, on hearing of the death of Selwyn, communicated with Lord Carlisle in the following terms:

"Je viens d'apprendre par une lettre de 11 Février 1791, de Mademoiselle Fagniani, que Mr. Selwin est mort, et qu'elle s'est rétirée chez vous, encouragée sans doute, par les bontés que vous lui avez temoigné, et dont je dois moi-même vous remercier jusqu'à ce moment ici: mais dorénavant il me faudra profitter de vos vertueux sentimens d'une manière bien différente de celle que peutêtre ma Fille avoit immaginé.

"Malgré la haute opinion que j'ay de vous et de votre respectable Famille, vous sentez bien que je ne puis pas permettre ni approuver, tandis que je suis vivante, que ma Fille reste eloignée de moi sans etre mariée, et je puis m'empêcher de faire ce que la nature et le devoir exigent de moi, et ce que vous feriez vous-même dans une pareille situation.

"Je me suis toujours opposée autant qu'il m'a été possible à l'éloignement de ma Fille, mais tandis que le Marquis Fagniani, son Père, a vécû, c'est en vain que j'ay souhaité de la retenir dans ce pays ci et dans le sein de sa Famille aussi bien que mes autres enfants, qui restoient auprès de moi.

" Aussi tôt que le Marquis Fagniani est mort, et je suis restée à l'administration de sa Famille, je n'ay jamais cessé d'écrire à Mr. Selwin et à ma Fille, et de faire tout mon possible pour la rapeller auprès de moi, mais l'opiniâtreté et les détours de Mr. Selwin, et peutêtre les égards que Mademoiselle Fagniani avoit pour lui, ont rendu inutiles tous mes efforts là dessus. Je sais même que Mr. Selwin a enlevé souvent les lettres que j'avais écrites à ma Fille, et qu'on a fait de tout pour me calomnier auprès d'elle, et pour lui faire croire que je l'avois oubliée, et qu'elle étoit abandonnée de ses Parents. Il est vray que de temps en temps j'ay reçû quelque lettres qu'elle étoit dans la supposition que je viens de vous dire. Maintenant que Mr. Selwin est mort, c'est à vous, Mylord, et à votre probité que j'ose m'adresser, afin que je puisse avoir ma Fille auprès de moi par des conseils dignes de vous, que vous pouvez lui donner, et qui peutêtre seront écoutés plus que les miens. C'est vous, Mylord, que j'implore pour advocat de ma tendresse maternelle, et j'ay telle opinion et telle confiance en vous, que j'espère que j'obtiendray de votre probité et de votre éloquence ce que je n'ay pu jusqu'ici obtenir de la voix de la nature même.

" Je vous promets maintenant que ma Fille sera toujours maîtresse de son bien, et de se choisir un établissment que lui convienne ; je n'auray jamais l'envie ni le courage de lui causer le moindre chagrin lorsque j'auray la consolation de la revoir après si longtemps, et tant d'amertume que j'ay souffert pour elle ! Je lui ay parlé toujours de la sorte, mais on lui a fait craindre que ce n'étoit que pour la flatter, et pour la tromper. Ce n'est pas mon caractère de tromper personne, mais bien moins de tromper mes enfans. Est-il possible, Mylord, qu'une Mère veuille

revoir sa Fille pour se rendre malheureuse? Je vous assure, Mylord, qu'elle pourra vivre, et disposer de soi-même chez moi comme elle pourrait le faire en Angleterre chez vous, mais jusqu'à ce qu'elle ne se trouve un établissement convenable, je n'auray jamais de tranquillité, ni de consolation à moins je n'aye cette Demoiselle auprès de moi.

" Encore une fois, Mylord, j'implore en ma faveur votre vertu et la haute réputation dont vous jouissez, consoler une pauvre Mère qui n'a d'autre espérance d'etre consolée qu'autant qu'il vous plaira de vous souvenir de ses larmes et de ses prières.

" Je suis, avec la plus grande considération, Mylord,

" Votre très-humble servante,

" La Marquise Fagniani."

Maria Fagniani did not return to her mother: she can scarcely have had any filial yearnings for a lady who had let her go from her for the greater part of her life.

In 1792 she married Lord Yarmouth (who succeeded to the Marquisate of Hertford on the death of his father in 1822). The alliance, it may be assumed, was not very happy. Enough has been said in the previous chapter about the husband to suggest this. Among his many amours was his *affaire* with Fanny, one of the sisters of the notorious Harriette Wilson. However, he and his wife lived together for a number of years. In 1800 there was born to them a child, Richard Seymour Conway, who, when his father became Marquis of Hertford, took the courtesy title of Earl of Yarmouth, and in 1842 succeeded as fourth Marquis. He it was who founded the great collections, which he bequeathed to Sir Richard Wallace, who was supposed to be the natural son of Maria Fagniani.

As for the Marchioness, she had a liaison with Marshal Androche, which is said to have endured from 1802 until 1807. If these dates are correct, Lord Yarmouth must have turned a blind eye to the connection, for in 1803, according to the *Jerningham Letters*, he and his wife were, anyhow, from time to time, together: "Lord and Lady Yarmouth *sont encore ici à Paris, quoique 'old quiz' soit mourant à Londres.*" "Old quiz," it may be assumed, is "Old Q," the Duke of Queensberry, who, however, survived until 1810. Again in August, Lord Elgin, "*qui passoit ici en revenant de son ambassade, se trouve arrêté comme les autres, ainsi que Lord Yarmouth, qui est revenu d'Angleterre depuis trois jours, pour venir chercher sa cara sposa.*" As a matter of fact, Lord Yarmouth was detained at Paris, having landed in France just after the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens. There was born the second son of the marriage, Lord Henry Seymour, who, on his mother's death in 1856, inherited her great fortune. He only survived her three years, and was buried in her vault at Père Lachaise.

CHAPTER XII

LADY CRAVEN, AFTERWARDS MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH (1750-1828)

Lady Elizabeth Berkeley marries Lord Craven—Her devotion to letters—Her *affaire* with the Comte de Guines—Dr. Johnson—She visits Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill—Her verses and plays—Lady Craven's other intrigues—She goes to Paris—Meets the Margrave of Anspach—Their appreciation of each other—The Margravine—Scandal—Lady Craven corresponds with the Margrave—Her travels—She visits Anspach—Mdlle. Clairon—Lady Craven becomes the social dictator at Anspach—She travels with the Margrave—Death of the Margravine—The Margrave and Lady Craven come to London together—Lady Craven not received—They go to Lisbon—Death of Lord Craven—Marriage—Return to England—Brandenburgh House—Benham Valence, Newbury—The Margrave and Margravine entertain lavishly—The Queen declines to receive the Margravine—The Hon. Mrs. Hobart—Gambling—Almack's—The Margravine and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as letter-writers—Later years—Death.

Lady Elizabeth Berkeley, the youngest daughter of Augustus, fourth Earl of Berkeley, was a person who bulked largely in the public eye during the greater part of her life. She was beautiful and romantic, and captured the affections of the Hon. William Craven, whom she married at the age of sixteen. Two years later her husband succeeded to the barony of Craven.

Lord Craven was devoted, but the lady soon found him dull and uninspired. She wrote verses; he would not read them. She sought appreciation elsewhere, as other minor poets starved by lack of admiration at home have done. This she found, six years after her marriage, in the Comte (afterwards Duc) de Guines, who was at the French Ambassador's to the Court of St. James's. There was a very pretty scandal, which came to the ears of Lord Craven, who, however, forgave his wife—and

so, except for references to the *affaire* in the gutter Press of the day, no more was heard of it.

Lady Craven naturally affected literary society. Dr. Johnson liked her, and wrote her down as "beautiful, gay, and fascinating." She bandied verses with Horace Walpole—and one set is about as good, or as bad, as the other. When, in 1775, she visited him at Strawberry Hill he struck off on his press the following lines:

Genius, howe'er sublime, pathetic, free,
Trusts to the press for immortality.
To types would Craven her sweet lays prefer,
The press would owe immortal fame to her,
While she, too careless of so fair a face,
Would breathe eternal youth on every grace,
Ages unborn computing, with surprise,
From her own wit the brightness of her eyes.

She, not to be behind-hand, replied to the compliment:

Thus spoke the bard—while Craven, whom he sung,
In sad confusion bow'd her blushing head;
Her downcast eyes bespoke the poet wrong,
And fear'd a satire in each word he said.

Conscious that oft she felt the Muse's pow'r,
But conscious too, she felt it oft in vain;
Her heart to study ne'er had spar'd an hour,
That heart e'er bleeding at another's pain.

Untaught and unconfin'd by learned rules,
Say, would you bid her trust her simple lays
To the rude eye of sense, or scorn of fools,
To envy, poison of her youthful days.

Already has the face you deem so fair,
Unconscious, sown in many a female breast,
The bitter seed of envy's cank'ring care,
That bane of friendship—foe to woman's rest.—

Then spare, in pity, to some future day,
That praise, which all my sex would fain receive,
And let my life obscurely glide away,
Nor, for one woman, many others grieve.

So shall my careless hours, from envy free,
Be yet employed in silence with each Muse,
But yield to you that immortality,
Which I with grateful caution must refuse.

Lady Craven wrote more and more verses, composed plays (and acted in them at her own house), and dabbled in the production of what may be styled miscellaneous literature. Her translations of Pont de Vile's comedy, *La Somnambule*, was printed by Walpole, who wrote a long account of the first performance of her *Miniature Picture* at Drury Lane, in which "Perdita" Robinson took the part and Mrs. Abingdon delivered the epilogue. "It was amazing to see so young a woman entirely possess herself, but there is such an integrity and frankness in her consciousness of her own beauty and talents, that she speaks of them with a naïveté as if she had no property in them, but only wore them as gifts of the Gods," Walpole said of the author. "The audience, though very civil, missed a fair opportunity of being gallant, for in one of those —logues, I forget which, the noble authoress was mentioned, and they did not applaud as they ought to have done exceedingly when she condescended to avow her pretty child, and was there looking so pretty. I could not help thinking to myself how many deaths Lady Harcourt would have suffered rather than encountered such an exhibition; yet Lady Craven's tranquillity had nothing displeasing —it was only the ease that conscious pre-eminence bestows on sovereigns, whether their empire consists in power or beauty. It was the ascendant of Millamont

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and Lady Betty Modish and Indamore; and it was tempered by her infinite good nature, which made her make excuses for the actors instead of being provoked at them."

It is to be feared that her first liaison was but the first. According to Charles Pigott, the author of the *Jockey Club*, which, it must be said, is a scandalous and unreliable work, "When Lord Craven perceived . . . that she was become a democratic in love, and had shown marks of *complaisance* to the *canaille*, he was surly, and indignant, and advised her to *take herself off* . . . The Peer settled £1,500 a year upon his spouse."

According to Lady Craven, however, the real reason for the separation was that her husband had taken unto himself a mistress, a Mrs. Byne or Byrne, with whom he lived for the rest of his life. Walpole, who had a sincere affection for her, had, however, doubts about the correctness of her conduct. "She has, I fear, been *infinitamente* indiscreet, but what is that to you or me?" he wrote to Sir Horace Mann. "She is very pretty, has parts, and is good-natured to the greatest degree, has not a grain of malice or mischief (almost always the associates in women of tender hearts), and never has been an enemy but to herself."

It is at this time of day immaterial whether husband or wife were to blame. Suffice that Lady Craven went to Paris in 1783; there she met Christian Frederick Charles Alexander, Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, and Bayreuth, who was at once greatly attracted by her, while she, for her part, thought him the best of men. In her Memoirs she says, "His Serene Highness had had instilled into his mind the principles of duty to God and his parents, with a strict observance of the laws both

human and divine, and was always at pains to benefit mankind or to protect the arts and sciences. Of how many eighteenth-century princes could this be said?" she wrote. "He bound those who were connected with him by his humanity, his indulgence, and the popularity of his manners. When he became a sovereign he cultivated and encouraged all the arts, and was particularly partial to the Latin language. In every action of his life he evinced the happy effects of his good education; but most particularly in the government of his principalities, and the administration of his own private affairs. His maxims were well digested; designed not for ostentation, but for the regulation of life. It may here be remarked that, however liberal Nature may be with her gifts, though she grant profusely good qualities to a man, unless a wise and diligent education direct them, and the spark of virtue be fanned by the breath of wisdom into a flame, good precepts may be extinguished, or do more harm than good, by causing base actions." At the age of eighteen he had contracted an alliance with a Princess of Saxe-Coburg.

"The Margravine, his wife," she wrote, "was born with an inward defect of bodily constitution; which made her so unhealthy that at thirteen years old she became subject to fits. Mental or corporeal enjoyments of any kind she never could have possessed; she was in a continual state of bodily pain. Naturally fair, sickness gave her the appearance of a faded lily when it begins to assume a yellow hue. With the best intentions, she had not the power, even of countenance, to give expression to a feeling. Such was the person given to the most lively, the most ardent, and the most active young man; and although his own passions, the allurements of every beautiful woman to please him, the many

concerted schemes of politicians to persuade him to a divorce after his marriage, that he might marry a young and healthy Princess who might produce an heir to his principalities, would have been motives sufficient for the generality of men; yet nothing could seduce the Margrave from what he imagined to be a duty. Reasons of every kind were adopted; some of which were very plausible, nay even justifiable: the facility of divorces in the Protestant countries of Germany, the duties he owed to posterity, his own private interest that his sovereignty might not pass from his family at his death —all these were used in vain. "I am her husband," he replied to all these persuasions; "therefore, as long as she lives, as her husband I am bound to protect her." The cold and dignified manner in which he spoke this negative put an end to all the hopes, and all the plots which were eternally forming around him, to urge him to shake off the bonds into which he had been forced.

In fact, the Margrave, it would appear, was an Admirable Crichton, and, to boot, an Admirable Crichton unsuitably mated. Lady Craven sympathised with this unfortunate gentleman, and he was so appreciative of her kindness that very soon a censorious world coupled together their names. Lady Craven was most distressed at the interpretation put upon this innocent friendship, and she at once made it known that she had known His Serene Highness all her life. It must be noted, however, that the Margrave, who was a nephew of the Consort of George II, came to England in 1763, when she was thirteen years of age, and that it is not known that Lady Craven ever went abroad until now.

However, there is her word for it that the relations were platonic, for, writing to him from Paris in 1785, she says: "The honour you do me, in wishing to hear

from me, deserves in return a greater entertainment than my letters can afford ; and if it was not for the precious name of sister, which you order me to take, I should perhaps be a long time before I could venture to write to you ; but when you command me to look upon you as my brother, the idea coincides so perfectly with the esteem and friendship I feel for you, that I obey with pleasure."

Anyhow, while she was travelling, Lady Craven wrote constantly to the Margrave. She published the letters in book form in 1786 ; and perhaps, as proof of the innocence of this friendship, it may be mentioned that when she was wandering about Europe she had as companion one Henry Vernon, a great-nephew of the Admiral of that name. She roamed at will—Orleans, Lyons, Avignon, Hyères, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, and Venice. We hear of her at Cracow ; St. Petersburg, where she was graciously received at Court ; Moscow, Constantinople, Gravanchi, Vienna ; and so, for a while, to Anspach. Presumably "Cousin Vernon" did not accompany her to Anspach, where she laboured under the delusion " of having pleased the Margravine." To give her own words : " On my arrival at Anspach the joy of the Margravine at seeing me was very great, as she knew it was by my desire that the Margrave had returned earlier than usual ; for she loved and esteemed him as much as he deserved, notwithstanding her general coldness."

The October of 1786 found Lady Craven back in England, but she stayed only a short time. She saw her husband, with whom she adopted a high moral tone, making arrangements for intercourse with her children —and so again abroad. A few months at Paris, and then again to Anspach. There for many years had resided the famous French actress Claire Joséphine Hippolyte Legris de la Tude, professionally known as Mdlle. Clairon,

the "official" mistress of the Margrave. The struggle for supremacy between the two women can be better imagined than described. What Mdlle. Clairon, aged fifty-seven, thought of her younger rival the curious may read in her *Mémoires*. What Lady Craven thought of her has been put on record. "Accident had led the Margrave to an acquaintance with Mademoiselle Clairon, the celebrated French actress, who shone at Paris as the first female tragedian of her time. As Mademoiselle Clairon perfectly well knew how to appreciate the value of such a man, she formed the design of ingratiating herself into his favour by every means that the fertility of her powers produced. Well aware of the candour of this Prince, of his noble and unaffected simplicity, of the tender and constant interest which her society must excite if her plans were well arranged, she determined at once to effect a superiority over his heart, which she knew must, from his unfortunate situation, be vacant. She resolved, therefore, on visiting Anspach, and on sacrificing herself, as she averred, for the happiness of a sovereign, and for the glory of a nation. Under the pretence of disinterested affection, she therefore quitted Paris, to extend her sensibility over a soul which she well knew was capable of the utmost refinement." How different was the conduct of Lady Craven, Lady Craven was at pains to point out.

Lady Craven won the day, and set herself up as social dictator. "When I am in Anspach I will court the Muses; like the violet shaded and defended by the majestic oak, fearless then I may blossom in the shade," she had written to the Margrave from England. She founded a literary club, and invited all and sundry to attend its meetings. After the departure of Mdlle. Clairon, the theatre was placed at her disposal, and

she wrote plays to be represented there, for the performance of which she impressed the Court officials and members of the nobility. For herself she modestly reserved the leading parts.

When she wished to travel the Margrave formed a party and accompanied her, she taking her young son, Richard Keppel Craven, as her protector. She went with him to Italy, and also to Berlin, where the sale of the principality of Anspach to the King of Prussia was negotiated. At this time she was described by the Countess Sophia Marie von Voss as "faded, intelligent, conceited, interests herself in no one, allows no men to be presented to her, and converses only with the Margrave, who seems to be bewitched by her." It passed her understanding, she said, that such a person as Lady Craven was received at that Court. However, the King of Prussia lent her a palace, and greeted her: "This is yours. You are my adopted sister as well as the Margrave's." After that, who would deny Frederick William III a sense of humour?

Lady Craven was not ungrateful for the many kindnesses of the Margrave. In 1790 the Duke of Montagu died, and so a Blue Ribbon was vacant. She at once begged Francis Jackson, then Secretary of Legation at Berlin, to interest himself to secure this for the Margrave. "I shall never cease *endeavouring* to put the King of England in mind that the Margrave has double and triple rights to have it," she wrote to him. "Applying to the Lords and Dukes in Place in England is of no use, as it is the object of *all* their wishes separately. I beg you to talk to Mr. Ewart upon the Subject and tell him that it is the only thing the Margrave wishes; and, if he can by any means procure it, I shall think myself infinitely obliged to him. It would be the height of

idle vanity in me to suppose he could trouble himself merely to oblige me, but if he knew, as I do, how many obligations the royal family of England and Prussia have to the Margrave as an honourable and good man he would exert himself in this Business, particularly as (I may say) the Margrave till now has had a very indifferent return for the attachment and natural love he has to all that is English."

When the party returned from Berlin to Anspach it was greeted with the news that the Margravine had passed away. The Prince had now neither wife nor home, and in May 1791 he came to England. Lady Craven returned at the same time. They hoped that society would accept them, but they soon found that this was not the case. They went to stay with William Beckford at Fonthill, and the Margrave poured out his distressed soul to his host. "I lose not a moment, my dear Sir William, in thanking you for your kind letter and in telling you that the Margrave and Lady Craven are here," Beckford wrote to Sir William Hamilton. "The Margrave all goodness, meekness, and resignation—my Lady, all eyes, nose, fire, and fury, exclaiming against relations who will not allow her to live as she likes, and against beastly Germans, who accuse her of leading their gentle Sovereign out of his senses and out of his Dominions. I shall obey your commands in saying civil things to them in your name. I believe they intend taking their departure for Lisbon in a few days, where it is to be hoped no drunken husbands or boring brothers will disturb their felicity."

Lady Craven's brother, the Earl of Berkeley, was the "boring brother." Him the Margrave had endeavoured to propitiate. In vain His Serene Highness informed the Earl by letter that it was a recognised custom in his country to take a wife with the left hand, and that he had

espoused Lady Craven in that manner, and intended to marry her as his right hand also, when she should be a widow. Lord Berkeley replied coldly that his sister was married to an English peer and could not possibly be married to any other man.

If Lord Berkeley would not recognise the morganatic marriage, it was beyond hope that anyone else of repute would do so. Therefore, disgusted, the Margrave and Lady Craven left England, and embarked upon a tour of the Peninsula. While they were at Lisbon they heard of the death of Lord Craven, which had taken place on September 26, 1791. On the following October 30 they were married in the chapel of the British Embassy. "Oh! I this moment recollect to tell your Ladyship that Lady Craven received the news of her Lord's death on a Friday, went into weeds on Saturday, and into white satin and *many* diamonds Sunday, and in that vestal trim was married to the Margrave of Anspach by my cousin's chaplain, though he and Mrs. Walpole excused themselves from being present," Horace Walpole wrote to Lady Ossory in November. "The bride excused herself for having so *few* diamonds; they had been the late Margravine's, but she is to have many more, and will soon set out for England, where they shall astound the public by living in a style of magnificence unusual, as they are richer than anybody in this country. The Dukes of Bedford, Marlborough, and Northumberland may hide their diminished rays!"

The happy pair most certainly fulfilled Walpole's anticipations concerning their way of living. Money being no object to them—it has been estimated that the Margrave's income was £100,000 a year—they were able to embark upon absolute orgies of entertainment. Their town residence on the banks of the Thames, near

Fulham, they called Brandenburgh House, and here were given breakfasts, dinners, receptions, masquerades, balls, concerts, and, in a theatre specially erected by the Margravine, plays. Then the Margrave, at the request of his wife, purchased Benham Valence, Newbury, which had been until lately the Berkshire seat of the Craven family, and settled it on her absolutely.

Matters did not, however, pan out according to the plans made by the Margravine. She and her husband were not welcomed on their return with the enthusiasm that they had expected. In fact, there were indications in several quarters that most people would have preferred them to have remained abroad. One of the first communications they received ran : " With due deference to the Margravine of Anspach, the Miss Cravens inform her that, out of respect of their father, they cannot wait upon her." This was signed by her three eldest daughters, who were confirmed in their attitude by her eldest son, who did not call on her. Lord Berkeley, the guardian of her children, reproached her for having remarried so soon after the death of her first husband. " I deigned to reply," she mentions, "and observed that it was six weeks after Lord Craven's decease that I gave my hand to the Margrave, which I should have done six hours after, had I known it at the time. I represented that I had been eight years under all the disadvantages of widowhood, without the only consolation which a widow could desire at my time of life—which was that of bestowing my hand where I might forget, by the virtues of one man, the folly and neglect of another, to whom it had been my unfortunate lot to be sacrificed."

There were other troubles, too. The Queen sent a message to the Margrave by the Prussian Minister to say that it was not her intention to receive his wife as

the Margravine of Anspach. No explanation was vouchsafed. The Margrave demanded an audience of the King, but refused to make his bow to Her Majesty. The King of Prussia had, at the request of the Margrave, bestowed upon Lady Craven, as she then was, the title of a Princess of the German Empire—Princess Berkeley—and it had been her intention to be presented at Court under that style, but the King refused to recognise that title, and could not be induced to reverse his decision on this matter. The Margravine was advised to attend as a peeress of England, but this she declined to do, holding that it would have been to acknowledge that, although wife of the Margrave, she was nothing more than Lady Craven.

Many people came to Brandenburgh House, including the Prince of Wales, and the Dukes of York and Clarence, but these and the greater number of other visitors came, so to speak, unofficially. In the end the Margravine had mainly to receive as her guests what Grantley Berkeley called "the gay world of both sexes." The most frequent visitor was the Hon. Mrs. Hobart, daughter of Lord Vere Bertie and wife of George Hobart, who in 1793 succeeded his half-brother John as (third) Earl of Buckinghamshire. She was celebrated for the breakfast-parties she gave at her house at Fulham, and was devoted to gambling, music, and the drama. It was she who, when the Margrave and Lady Craven were in London in the summer of 1791, gave a "Rural Breakfast and Promenade." An account of this entertainment appeared in the *European Magazine*.

> "This long-looked-for and long-prevented *déjeuner* was given yesterday in spite of the weather. It is almost needless to remark that all the first nobility and fashion about town graced this most delightful

fête. The Prince of Wales came first, and precisely at one o'clock. About four or five hundred persons were present: amongst them was the Duke of Gloucester, the Duchesses of Rutland and Gordon, the Margravine of Anspach, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Duke of Queensberry, several of the *corps diplomatique*, and many other foreigners of the very first distinction. The Duke of Clarence was expected, but did not attend. The breakfast lasted from two till past seven o'clock.

"The leading person in this entertainment (which was obliged to be confined to the house on account of the weather) was Mrs. Bristow, a near relative of Mrs. Hobart. This lady, who had long resided at the Indian Court of Lucknow, was every inch a queen. Draped in all the magnificence of Eastern grandeur, Mrs. Bristow represented the Queen of Nourjahad, as the 'Light of the World' in the Garden of Roses. She was seated in the larger drawing-room, which was very beautifully fitted up with cushions in the Indian style, smoking her hookah, amidst all sorts of the choicest perfumes. Mrs. Bristow was very profuse with otto of roses, drops of which were thrown about the ladies' dresses. The whole house was scented with the most delicious fragrance."

Lady Buckinghamshire's reputation was not everything that it might have been. There seems to be no reason to doubt her morals, but there was a very general idea that her methods at play were questionable. Indeed, it was through her and other ladies of quality that gambling was brought into grave disrepute. It was asserted openly that certain society women attracted to their houses wealthy young men, and, not to put too

fine a point on it, fleeced them. Faro was the favourite game for this purpose, and the leaders of this sport were named in the public prints—Lady Buckinghamshire, Lady Archer, and Lady Mount Edgecumbe. Indeed, these were nicknamed, "Faro's Daughters." Gillray scarified them more than once, but neither his cartoons nor those of the other caricaturists of the day affected their activity or induced them to mend their ways.

It was in 1796 that Lord Chief Justice Kenyon, summing up in a case connected with gambling, made special reference to women of rank who encouraged the craze. "They think they are too great for the law; I wish they could be punished," he expressed himself emphatically. "If any prosecutions of this nature are fairly brought before me, and the parties are justly convicted, whatever their rank or station in the country, though they shall be the first ladies in the land, they shall certainly exhibit themselves in the pillory."

The following paragraph appeared in *The Times* of March 13, 1797:

> "Public Office, Marlborough Street.—On Saturday came to be heard informations against Lady Buckinghamshire, Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, Mrs. Sturt, and Mr. Concannon, for having on the night of the thirtieth of last January played at Faro, at Lady Buckinghamshire's house in St. James's Square, and Mr. Martindale was charged with being the proprietor of the table. The evidence went to prove that the defendants had gaming parties at their different houses in rotation; and that, when they met at Lady Buckinghamshire's, the witnesses used to wait upon them in the gambling-room, and that they played at E. O., Rouge et Noir, etc., from about eleven or twelve until three or four in the

morning. After hearing counsel, the Magistrates convicted Henry Martindale in the penalty of £200 and each of the ladies in £50. The information against Mr. Concannon was quashed, on account of his being summoned by a wrong Christian name."

Of course gaming was not confined to private houses. It was rampant in the clubs before and during the Regency. At White's and Brooke's the play was incredibly high. Charles James Fox, the most beloved man of his day, lost vast sums. At one time he played whist, and by his skill made some thousands a year, but when he abandoned whist for games of pure chance success passed him by. In fact, his bad fortune became a bye-word.

At Almack's of pigeons I'm told there are flocks,
But it's thought the completest is one Mr. Fox.
If he touches a card, if he rattles the box,
Away flies the guineas of this Mr. Fox.
He has met, I'm afraid, with so many hard knocks
That cash is not plenty with this Mr. Fox.
In gaming 'tis said, he's the stoutest of crocks;
No man can play deeper than this Mr. Fox.
O ye hawks, sure your hearts must be harder than rocks,
If you win without pity from this Mr. Fox.
And he must always lose, for the strongest of locks
Cannot keep money for this Mr. Fox.
No doubt such behaviour exceedingly shocks
All the friends and acquaintance of this Mr. Fox.
And they wish from their souls they could put in the stocks,
And make an example of this Mr. Fox.
He's exceedingly curious in coats and frocks,
So the tailor's a pigeon to this Mr. Fox.
Nay, his clothes and his shirts, and her ladyship's smocks
Would be pawned for a guinea by this Mr. Fox.
He delights in hunting, that, fat as an ox;
I pity the horses of this Mr. Fox.
They are probably most of them lame in the hocks,
Such a heavy-made fellow is this Mr. Fox.

Horace Walpole had a good deal to say about Fox and his gaming. "Fox," he wrote in February 1772, "had

sat up playing at Hazard at Almack's from Tuesday evening, the fourth, till five in the afternoon of Wednesday, the fifth. An hour before, he had recovered £12,000 he had lost, and by dinner, which was at five o'clock, he had ended, losing £11,000. On the Thursday he spoke in the above debate, went to dinner at half-past eleven at night ; from thence to White's, where he drank till seven the next morning ; thence to Almack's, where he won £6,000 ; and between three and four in the afternoon set out for Newmarket. His brother Stephen lost £10,000 two nights after, and Charles £11,000 on the thirteenth, so that in three nights the two brothers, the eldest not twenty-five, lost £23,000." Nearly everyone played, even William Wilberforce, the philanthropist took a hand once or twice when he first joined Brooke's. Lord Robert Spencer went bankrupt ; George Selwyn lost more than enough ; and Brummell ruined himself and had to fly to Calais. One night in 1814 Brummell lost £10,000. Ill-luck pursuing him, a few days later he had lost practically every penny of his fortune. He expressed the wish that some one would bind him never to play again. " I will," said his friend Pemberton Mills, giving him a ten-pound note, Brummell to forfeit a thousand pounds if he played during the next month. A fortnight later Mills saw the Beau at the hazard-table at White's. He did not ask for the forfeit, but said plaintively, " Anyhow, Brummell, you might give me back the tenner ! "

Almack's Club is not to be confounded with the Assembly of the same name.

The great ladies of the day founded an institution of their own, which was to them what White's was to the men of their set. This was known as Almack's Assembly—called after the manager, whose real name, however, was

William MacCall, he having transposed his surname owing perhaps to the unpopularity of the Scots in London. "There is now opened here, in three very elegent new-built rooms, a ten-guinea subscription, for which you have a ball and supper once a week for twelve weeks," Gilly Williams wrote to George Selwyn in 1765. "You may imagine by the sum the company is chosen. . . . The men's tickets are not transferable, so, if the ladies do not like us, they have no opportunity of changing us. . . . Our female Almack's flourish beyond description. Almack's Scotch face, in a bag-wig, waiting at supper, would divert you as would his lady in a sack, making tea and curtseying to the duchesses."

Mrs. Fitzroy, Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Meynell, Lady Molyneux, Miss Pelham, and Miss Lloyd were among the fourteen foundresses who settled the constitution and rules. "There are seventy-five chosen (the whole number is to be two hundred)," Mrs. Boscawen told Mrs. Delany. "The ladies nominate and choose the gentlemen, and vice versa, so that no lady can exclude a lady, or gentleman a gentleman! The Duchess of Bedford was at first blackballed, but is since admitted. . . . Lady Rochfort and Lady Harrington are blackballed, as are Lord March, Mr. Boothby, and one or two more who think themselves pretty gentlemen *du premier ordre*, but it is plain the ladies are not of their opinion. When any of the ladies dine with the society, they are to send word before, but supper comes of course, and is to be served always at eleven. Play is to be deep and constant probably."

Everyone who was anyone, and also many who were no one, strove for election to this most exclusive gathering. "At the present time," Gronow recorded in 1863 of Almack's half a century earlier, "one can hardly conceive the importance which was attached to getting

admittance to Almack's, the seventh heaven of the fashionable world. Of the three hundred officers of the Foot Guards, not more than half a dozen were honoured by vouchers of admission to this exclusive temple of the *beau monde*; the gates of which were guarded by lady patronesses whose smiles or frowns consigned men and women to happiness or despair. These lady patronesses were the Ladies Castlereagh, Jersey, Cowper, and Sefton, Mrs. Drummond Burrell, the Princess Esterhazy, and the Countess Lieven. The most popular of these *grandes dames* was unquestionably Lady Cowper, now Lady Palmerston. Lady Jersey's bearing, on the contrary, was that of a theatrical tragedy queen, and, whilst attempting the sublime, she frequently made herself simply ridiculous, being inconceivably rude, and in her manner often ill-bred. Lady Sefton was kind and amiable, Madame de Lieven haughty and exclusive; Princess Esterhazy was a *bon enfant*, Lady Castlereagh and Mrs. Burrell *de très grandes dames*."

There was much scheming for admission, and all the resources of private diplomacy were employed to secure a voucher. No one even remotely connected with commerce could possibly succeed in such a quest. Also, to be invited to a ball it was necessary to be known as a skilful dancer.

How shall the Muse, with colours faint
And pencil blunt, aspire to paint
Such high-raised hopes, such chilling fears,
Entreaties, threatenings, smiles, and tears!
The vainest beauty will renounce
Her last imported blonde or flounce;
The gamester leaves a raw beginner,
The diner-out forgo his dinner;
The stern reformer change his notions,
And waive his notices of motions;
The bold become an abject croucher,
And the grave—giggle for a *voucher*.

Henry Luttrell's "Advice to Julia," from which the above lines are quoted, was only one of many attacks, more or less malicious, upon Almack's, but the lady patronesses went their way unheeding. Lady Jersey, wife of the fifth Earl, was the presiding genius, and she ruled with an iron hand. An officer in the Guards applied for a voucher, and received a refusal from Willis (who had succeeded Almack as manager), who told him that Lady Jersey, being unacquainted with him, had advised the lady patronesses not to send him a ticket for the ball. The aggrieved man challenged Lord Jersey to a duel, but Lord Jersey declined to meet him, saying sensibly and good-humouredly that, if all the persons who did not receive tickets from his wife were to call him out, he should have to make up his mind to become a target for young officers!

If you were anything less than Royalty, and had left your voucher at home, you could not enter the sacred portals.

What form is that, with looks so sinister?
Willis, their Excellencies' minister.
See where in portly pride he stands
To execute their high commands;
Unmoved his heart, unbribed his hands.
See, where the barrier he prepares
Just at the bottom of the stairs,
Midst fragrant flowers and shrubs exotic:—
A man relentless and despotic
As he of Tunis, or Algiers,
Or any of their Grand Viziers.

Suppose the prize by hundred miss'd
Is yours at last.—You're on the list—
Your voucher's issued, duly signed;
But hold—your ticket's left behind.
What's to be done? There's no admission.
In vain you flatter, scold, petition,
Feel your blood mounting like a rocket,
Fumble in vain in every pocket.
"The rule's so strict, I dare not stretch it."
Cries Willis, "Pray, my lord, go fetch it."

"Nonsense," you cry, "so late at night—
Surely you know me, sir, by sight."
"Excuse me—the committee sat
This morning."—"Did they, what of that?"
"An order given this very day,
My lord, I dare not disobey.
Your pardon." Further parley's vain;
So for your ticket, in the rain,
Breathless, you canter home again.

So strict were the rules about dress that the Duke of Wellington was turned away one night when he was wearing trousers, and had to go to Apsley House to don the regulation knee-breeches.

It was at Almack's that the quadrille was first danced, and among its sponsors was Lady Jersey. That was in 1815, but two years earlier Almack's had given its patronage to the waltz (then called the *volse*), which came from Germany. Before that there were only country dances, Scotch jigs, and Highland reels.

The Margravine of Anspach was not a member of Almack's, much as she would like to have been. She had to do her entertaining at her own houses. She had, however, many resources within herself. She was always fond of composing plays, short stories, and verses. In fact, she was inclined to take herself seriously as an authoress, and had a very real jealousy of other women writers. She was especially pleased with her powers as a letter-writer, and so thought harshly of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose correspondence was highly praised. This also she could not tolerate. "My acquaintance with Lady Bute, the daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, began in a very singular way," she mentions in her Memoirs. "She sent me a very polite message on hearing that I had said, the cloven foot of the pedant was plainly to be perceived in the printed Letters of her mother; that some things might be hers, but I was

sure most of the Letters were composed by men. Her Ladyship, having heard this remark, upon her introduction to me said, that she had always had a high opinion of my sense, and what I had observed respecting her mother's Letters confirmed it. She then told me, that Mr. Walpole and two other wits, friends of his, joined in a trio to divert themselves at the expense of the credulity of the English public, by composing those Letters."

Of course this is arrant nonsense, and it is inconceivable that Lady Bute could have said anything of the kind; but it is impossible now to see how the misunderstanding arose. Some other remarks the Margravine made about Lady Mary brought down on her a stern rebuke from Horace Walpole, in spite of the fact that he never had a great liking for the famous letter-writer. "I am sorry to hear, madam, that by your account Lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate as modern travellers," he addressed her. "The invaluable art of inoculation which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe, perhaps, the preservation of yours, stamps her an universal benefactress; and as you rival her in poetic talents I had rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum, than detect her for romancing."

The Margrave died at Benham Valence in 1806, and his widow gave full rein to her imagination in arranging a most tremendous ceremonial for his burial. She, however, soon emerged from retirement, and continued to entertain at Bradenburgh House on a very considerable scale. English society, however, continued to hold aloof, and after the first abdication of Napoleon she went abroad, and remained away, mostly in Italy, for the rest of her life. She died at Naples in 1828, in her seventy-eighth year, and was buried in the old British cemetery in that city.

CHAPTER XIII

HARRIETTE WILSON (1789–1846)

Her parentage—Her appearance—The fast life—Her sisters, Amy, Fanny, Sophia—Lord Dewhurst—Another sister, Charlotte—Harriette Wilson, the mistress of Lord Craven—Other lovers—Her popularity—Her distinguished visitors—Her affected demureness—Byron attracts her fancy—but declines the acquaintance—She goes to Paris—The Marquis of Worcester—Her Memoirs—Blackmail—Tom Raikes—Beau Brummell—Harriette marries one Rochfort—Later years—Death.

HARRIETTE WILSON was an outstanding figure in the fast world of the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In the *Dictionary of National Biography* the late Thomas Seccombe described her as a " woman of fashion," which was very generous of him. She might have been described as a demirep, but for the fact that this means a person of suspected character. There was no doubt whatever about the morals of Harriette, or of her sisters, as they themselves would have been quick to admit.

Harriette Wilson was the daughter of a small shopkeeper in Mayfair, by name John James Dubouchet. Her mother was a most attractive person, who, it would appear, had, like her daughters after her, some amorous adventures. Beyond this, nothing is known of the lady; but Harriette has written a few words about her father.

" My father was a proud Swiss, rather unpopular, and a deep mathematician. We were never, in our youth, either allowed to address him, or speak in his presence, except in low whispers, for fear of driving a problem out of his head. He valued his sons, according to the progress they made in that science. For the girls he felt all the

contempt due to those who voted ' *x* plus minus *g* ' a dead bore. He was remarkably handsome, with white teeth, expressive eyes and eyebrows, which used to frighten us half out of our senses."

Harriette, who spoke English and French indifferent well, had some slight smattering of education, and picked up more as she lived. Her appearance has been described by Sir Walter Scott, who met her in 1825 at Mat. Lewis's in Argyle Street, London, " where the company chanced to be fairer than honest." " Far from beautiful," he described her, " but a smart, saucy girl, with good eyes, and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy."

According to Harriette, who spared no one, and least of all her sisters, it was her eldest sister, Amy, who was the first to set the bad example: " her virtue was something like the nine lives of a cat." Her first lover sent her to school again; from that she eloped with the soldier who presently became General Sir George Allan Madden. Later she set up her establishment in York Place, Baker Street, and there entertained on a fairly extensive scale at the expense of her several lovers. For a while she associated with Count Palmella; later she lived with the musician Bochsa.

Whether Fanny, the beauty of the family, was the next in age, is not clear. She followed in Amy's footsteps, but, falling in love with one Woodcock, by whom she had three children, she lived for some years a retired life. They were devoted to each other, and might have married—but for the fact that there was already a Mrs. Woodcock. After her lover's death she became as gay as her sisters. Then she had an *affaire* with a Colonel Parker, and for some time was known as Mrs. Parker. Her last hours were soothed by the kindness of Lord Yarmouth (afterwards third Marquis of Hertford).

Sophia, a third sister, was no whit behind the other in morals. "I was soon visited by my dear mother," Harriette wrote, whether to show herself as an affectionate sister or to annoy Lord Deerhurst cannot, of course, be said. "She wished to consult me about what was best to be done to put my young sister out of the way of that most profligate nobleman, Lord Deerhurst, who was, she said, continually watching her in the Park and streets, whenever she went out. I could hardly believe that any thing wrong could be meant towards a child scarcely thirteen years of age, but my mother assured me that he had been clandestinely writing to her, and sending her little paltry presents of gilt chains, such as are sold by Jews in the streets; these said trumpery articles being presented to my sister Sophia in old jewel-boxes of Love and Wirgman, in order to make it appear to the poor child that they were valuable.

"'I see no remedy,' said my dear mother, 'but sending Sophia to some school at a distance; and I hope to obtain her father's consent for that purpose, as soon as possible. No time is to be lost, Sophia being so sly, about receiving these things, that I only found it out by the greatest accident. The last were delivered by a young friend of her's, quite a child, to whom Lord Deerhurst addressed himself, not having been able to meet with Sophia lately.'

"I was very much disgusted with this account, and quite agreed with my mother that it would be the safest plan to send the child away.

"Before she took her leave she assured me that, if possible, Sophia should depart immediately."

Eventually, however, the Viscount had his way with Sophia—to the great disgust of her mother and Harriette, running away with him "immediately after we had

represented the shocking profligacy and disgusting meanness of Lord Deerhurst in passing off trumpery chains and rings for valuable jewellery." However, when Lord Deerhurst offered to settle three hundred a year on Sophia " as long as no proof of inconstancy to him should be established against her," her family advised her to accept this. Years afterwards, but while still in her teens, she married Thomas Noel Hall, second Baron Berwick, and survived until 1875, when she passed away at the age of eighty-one.

There was yet another sister, Charlotte, who was very much younger. " She was a sweet, lovely, little thing, and promised to be one of the finest dancers of the age. It was not the profession my mother would have preferred, but Charlotte promised to do wonders in it ; and, with her striking beauty, there could have been little doubt of her marrying well from the stage ; and a mother who has fifteen children to provide for cannot do as she pleases," Harriette wrote in her Memoirs. " Charlotte had, already, made her début as Cupid and delighted every body who saw her, when Lord and Lady Berwick, seized with a fit of pride, which they nicknamed virtue, begged leave to snatch the child from such a shocking profession, and they undertook to bring up and provide for her, under their own eyes. My poor mother joyfully closed with this, apparently kind, offer, and immediately made Charlotte forsake, the profession, which, with her talents, must have made her fortune, with or without marriage, to go and live with Sophia.

" The child, when at her country seat, became a great favourite with the wife of Lord Berwick's brother, Mrs. Hill, and all went on charmingly, till Charlotte began to look like a woman, and one of such uncommon loveliness as to attract the attention of all the elegant young men in

the neighbourhood. Sophia could not endure this. Even at the opera, many a man has preferred offering his arm to Charlotte ; nay, it was said a country gentleman of very large property was expected to make Charlotte an honourable proposal. This was too much. Poor Charlotte, after having forsaken the profession in which she must have succeeded, to be bred up in luxury among nobility, who looked on her as half an angel, was bundled off to a country school, there to earn her daily bread, by birching young, vulgar misses, and teaching them their French and English grammar, and there has poor Charlotte been forced to bloom unseen, wasting her sweetness on the desert air, ever since.

" Patronage is a fine thing ! ! !

" I should like to know what Charlotte says about it, as she sits darning her cotton stockings on a Saturday night."

Harriette was a very charming young girl, and at an early age had a way with the men. When she was fifteen she was established as the kept mistress of the Earl of Craven, son of that Lady Craven who was afterwards Margravine of Anspach. While this connection endured she had an intrigue with the Hon. Frederick Lamb, a younger brother of the Prime Minister, who in 1848 he succeeded as (third) Viscount Melbourne. Prominent among her subsequent lovers was the Marquis of Lorne, who in 1806 became the sixth Duke of Argyll.

" The Modern Aspasia," as Sheil styled her, was very popular with the dandies and men-about-town. Many personages of note in politics and society came to her receptions. Her visiting list is too long to be given in full, but certain names call for special mention. The Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Leinster, the Duc de Berri, the Earl of Fife, Lord Yarmouth, Lord Hertford (who,

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however, was more interested in Amy), John Wilson Croker, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Alvanley, Lord Granville, Leveson-Gower, Lord Ponsonby, Henry Brougham, Lord Frederick Bentinck, Berkeley Craven, Richard Meyler (to whom she wished to be married, much to his alarm), the Duc de Guiche, Lord Petersham, Lord Arthur Hill, Lord William Russell, George Brummell, Lord Henry de Ros, John William Ward, and Sir Henry Mildmay (second only to Brummell as a beau). Henry Luttrell came too, and piqued her. "He, as everybody knows, is the ugliest man alive, and he looks so solemn too with all," she wrote bitterly; "and yet, would you believe it, that witty fright, in all our intimacy, had the impudence never once to put the question to me." When she remonstrated with him, "You refuse very unexceptionable people," he retorted; "you refuse Fred Lamb, and why may not I refuse you? You do not excite me."

When the Marquis of Sligo, who had only met her once, wrote to her, "Will you be so condescending as to allow me to pass this evening, alone, with you, after Lady Lansdowne's party?" she sent for the footman who had brought the note, and told him to take it to his master, and "say from me, that I request he will be careful how he misdirects his letters in future, an accident which is no doubt caused by his writing them after dinner."

Harriette was not always on her high horse. When she took a fancy to a man, even though she did not know him, she would invite him to call on her. Byron attracted her fancy, and she wrote "to solicit the honour of his acquaintance."

"If my silence has hurt 'your pride or your feelings,' to use your own expressions," he replied, "I am very sorry for it; be assured that such effect was far from my

intention. Business, and some little bustle attendant on changing my residence, prevented me from thanking you for your letter as soon as I ought to have done. If my thanks do not displease you, now, pray accept them. I could not feel otherwise than obliged by the desire of a stranger to make my acquaintance. I am not unacquainted with your name or your beauty, and I have heard much of your talents; but I am not the person whom you would like, either as a lover or a friend. I did not, and do not, suspect you, to use your own words once more, of any design of making love to me. I know myself well enough to acquit any one, who does not know me, and still more those who do, from any such intention. I am not of a nature to be loved, and so far, luckily for myself, I have no wish to be so. In saying this, I do not mean to affect any particular stoicism, and may possibly, at one time or other, have been liable to those follies for which, you sarcastically tell me, I have now no time, but these and everything else are to me, at present, objects of indifference; and that is a good deal to say at six-and-twenty. You tell me that you wished to know me better: because you liked my writing. I think you must be aware that a writer is in general very different from his productions, and always disappoints those who expect to find in him qualities more agreeable than those of others; I shall certainly not be lessened in my vanity, as a scribbler, by the reflection that a work of mine has given you pleasure, and, to preserve the impression in its favour, I will not risk your good opinion by inflicting my acquaintance upon you."

This rebuff did not deter Harriette some time later, when Lord Byron was at Ravenna, from applying to him for money. Byron good-naturedly granted her request:

"I have just received your letter, dated 15th instant,

and will send you fifty pounds, if you will inform me how I can remit that sum; for I have no correspondence with Paris of any kind, my letters of credit being for Italy. But perhaps you can get some one to cash you a bill for fifty pounds on me, which I would honour; or you can give me a safe direction for the remission of a bill to that amount. Address to me at Ravenna, not Venice.

"With regard my refusal some years ago to comply with a very different request of yours, you mistook, or chose to mistake, the motive; it was not that 'I held you much too cheap,' as you say; but that my compliance with your request to visit you would, just then, have been a great wrong to another person; and, whatever you may have heard, or may believe, I have ever acted with good faith in things, even where it is rarely observed, as long as good faith is kept with me. I told you, afterwards, that I had no wish to hurt your self-love; and I tell you so again, when you will be more disposed to believe me.

"In answer to your wish that I shall tell you if I am 'happy,' perhaps it would be a folly in any human being to say so themselves, particularly a man who has had to pass through the sort of things which I have encountered; but I can, at least, say that I am not miserable, and am, perhaps, more tranquil than ever I was in England."

Towards the end of the Regency period, Harriette went to Paris. It is a striking sign of the times that the British Ambassador, Sir Charles Stuart (afterwards Baron Stuart de Rothsay), allowed her the use of the Foreign Office bag for the transmission of her correspondence to London. While there, she engaged in an intrigue with the Marquis of Worcester, eldest son of

the sixth Duke of Beaufort. The Marquis promised her an annuity of £500, but the promise was not fulfilled. What was worse, the Duke offered to compromise the matter by a single payment of £1,200. This proposal was regarded by Harriette as an outrage, and she determined to have her revenge.

The world of fashion was one morning in 1825 startled to read an announcement of the imminent publication of the *Memoirs of Harriette Wilson*. Many laughed, but some at least were terrified about what she might say. Amongst these, according to Harriette's account, was the Duke of Wellington, who threatened legal proceedings. "Unfortunately, Stockdale, the publisher, in a courteous fit," she wrote, "acquainted the immortal Wellington that I was about to publish a part of his private life, under the impression, of course, that every act which relates to so great a hero must be interesting! Will it ever be believed? His Grace, in the meek humility of his heart, has written to menace a prosecution if such trash be published! What trash, my dear Wellington? Now, I will admit for an instant, and it is really very good of me, that you are an excellent judge of literature, and could decide on the merits or demerits of a work with better taste and judgment than the first of Edinburgh reviewers. Still, in order to pronounce it trash, we should fancy that even Wellington himself must throw a hasty glance on one of its pages at least. Quite the contrary. Wellington knows himself to be the subject, and therefore wisely prejudges the book trash, one fortnight before it sees the light! So far, so good! But when my own Wellington, who has sighed over me, and groaned over me by the hour, talked of my wonderful beauty! ran after me! bribed Mrs. Porter, over and over again, after I refused to listen to his overtures,

only for a single smile from his beautiful Harriette! Did he not kneel? and was I not the object of his first, his most ardent wishes on his arrival from Spain? only it was such a pity that Argyle got to my house first. No matter! Though Argyle was not his rose, he had dwelled with it; therefore what could my tender swain Wellington do better than stand in the gutter, at two in the morning, pouring forth his amorous wishes, in the pouring rain, in strains replete with the most heart-rending grief, to the favoured and fortunate lover who had supplanted him, as Stockdale has indulged me, by getting so inimitably delineated. When, I say, this faithful lover, whose love survived six winters! six frosts! six chilling, nay, killing frosts! when Wellington sends the ungentle hint to my publisher, of hanging me—beautiful, adored, and adorable me—on whom he had so often hung! *alors je pend la tête*! Is it thus he would immortalise me?"

There is not the slightest doubt that the venture was inspired by a desire to levy blackmail. If anyone did not desire to figure in these reminiscences, it was quite simple—at a price. There is very definite proof of this in the issue of the *Globe and Traveller* for March 12, 1825, in which there is an editorial note, based upon the letter sent by the author to Edward Ellice.

"No. 111, Rue du Faubourg,
"St. Honoré,
"à Paris.
"*March* 8, 1825.

"'SIR,—People are buying themselves so fast out of my book, *Memoirs of H. Wilson*, that I have no

time to attend to them. Should be sorry not to give each *a chance*, if they *chuse to be out*. You are quizzed most *ummercifully*. Two Noble Dukes have taken my word, and I have never named them. I am sure —— would say you might trust me never to publish, or *cause* to be published, aught about you, if you like to forward £200 directly to me, else it will be too late, as the last volume, in which you shine, will be the property of the Editor and in his hands. Lord —— says he will answer for aught I agree to, so will my husband. *Do just as you like.* Consult only yourself. I get as much by a small book as you will give me for taking you out, or more. I attack no poor men, because they cannot help themselves. Adieu! Mind I have no time to write again, as what with writing books and then altering them for those who buy out, I am done up—*frappé en mort.* What do you think of my French?

Yours,

"Harriette Rochfort, *late* Wilson."

The Memoirs make dull reading. The style is execrable, and the matter trivial. All the members of her set are introduced by name—except those who paid to be omitted—but she says little or nothing of interest about even the most distinguished personages with whom she was acquainted. The author is only amusing when writing of people who had slighted her. Tom Raikes must have annoyed her, for she wrote bitterly of him.

"Not that Tom Raikes ever did any thing bad enough, or what is worse, any thing good enough to deserve the honour of a place in these my invaluable Memoirs; but, since I have named him, be it further known, that Tom Raikes is a merchant, who went to Paris, and picked

up French ; and he is something of a mimic too, and he can take off Brummell very tolerably, as well as the manners of the *vielle cour France beaux* ; but I never discovered that he could do anything else. His tricks, like those of the man at Calais, who entertains travellers, while they dine, by imitating singing birds, cuckoos, and castanets, are very well on the first representation ; but it is, indeed, heavy work to be thrown into the society of Mr. Thomas Raikes more than twice in one's life. Brummell often dined with him, and therefore I take it for granted Tom Raikes lent Brummell money. If he did, it was even for the *éclat* of the thing, and to have it to say, that Brummell had dined with him, and that Brummell, his friend Brummell, was an excellent fellow. Tom Raikes happens to be one of the meanest men in England ; at least, so I have heard from several of his *soi-disant* friends."

Brummell, too, was in her bad books, though she could not refuse him some admiration. He certainly was not one of her lovers.

" The members of Watier's Club," she wrote, " were as attentive to us as though they had all been valets and bred up to their situations like George Brummell, who, by the by, was the only exception. Instead of parading behind our chairs to enquire what we wanted, he sat teasing a lady with a wax mask, declaring that he would never leave her till he had seen her face."

She has left on record one of the few accounts of Brummell's appearance : " He was extremely fair, and the expression of his countenance far from disagreeable. His person, too, was rather good ; nor could anybody find fault with the lustre of all those who, for years, had made it a rule to copy the cut of Brummell's coat, the shape of his hat, or the tie of his neckcloth ; for all

this was in the very best possible style. No perfumes, Brummell used to say, but very fine linen, plenty of it, and country washing. If John Bull turns round to look after you, you are not well, but either too stiff, too tight, or too fashionable. Do not ride in ladies' gloves, particularly with leather breeches. In short, his maxims on dress were excellent. Besides this, he was neither uneducated nor deficient. He possessed, also, a sort of quaint dry humour, not amounting to anything like wit; indeed he said nothing which would bear repetition; but his affected manners, and little absurdities, amused for the moment. Then it became the fashion to court Brummell's society, which was enough to make many seek it who cared not for it, and many more wished to be well with him, through fear, for all knew him to be cold, heartless, and satirical." Harriette asserts that it was mere curiosity that led her to call on the Beau at Calais, where he was living in poverty. She has left on record her impression of this meeting.

"I made the Beau a hasty visit, just as the horses were being put to my carriage. My enquiry, '*si Monsieur Brummell étoit visible?*' was answered by his valet, just such a valet as one would have given the Beau, in the acme of his glory, *bien poudré, bien cérémonieux, et bien mis*, '*que monsieur fesoit sa barbe.*'

"'Pardon,' added the valet, seeing me about to leave my card, '*mais monsieur reçoit, en fesant sa barbe, toujours. Monsieur est à sa seconde toilette actuellement.*'

"I found the *beau en robe de chambre de Florence*, and if one might judge from his increased *embonpoint*, and freshness, his disgrace has not seriously affected him. He touched, lightly, on this subject, in the course of our conversation, *fesant toujours la barbe avec une grace*

toute particulière, et le moindre petit rasoir, que je n'eus jamais vu.

" Play, he said, had been the ruin of them all.

" ' Who do you include in your all ? '

" He told me there had been a rot in White's Club.

" ' I have heard all about your late trick, in London,' said I.

" Brummell laughed, and told me that, in Calais, he sought only French society ; because it was his decided opinion, that nothing could be more ridiculous than the idea of a man going to the continent, whether from necessity or choice, merely to associate with Englishmen. I asked him if he did not find Calais a very melancholy residence ?

" ' No,' answered Brummell, ' not at all. I draw, read, study French, and——'

" ' Play with that dirty French dog,' interrupted I.

" ' *Finissez donc, Louis,*' said he, laughing, and encouraging the animal to play tricks, leap on his *robe de chambre de Florence,* and make a noise. Then, turning to me, ' There are some very pretty French actresses at Paris. I had such a sweet green shoe, here, just now. In short,' added Brummell, ' I have never been in any place in my life where I could not amuse myself.'

" Brummell's table was covered with seals, chains, snuff-boxes, and watches, as he said, from Lady Jersey, and various other ladies of high rank.

" The only talent I could ever discover in this beau, was that of having well-fashioned the character of a gentleman, and proved himself a tolerably good actor, yet to a nice observer, a certain impenetrable, unnatural stiffness of manner proved him but Nature's journeyman, after all ; but then his wig . . . his new French wig was nature itself."

On a subsequent visit, when she was accompanied by Berkeley Craven, Brummell told her that her book was infamous and shocking.

"'What has that truly amiable woman, the Duchess of Beaufort, done, pray?' asked the great man of Calais.

"'Abused me most shockingly, to begin with, in letters addressed to her son,' I replied.

"'And I? What have I done?' retorted the Beau, whose self was, and will be, ever uppermost.

"'Very little for the State, I believe, at least until you took French leave, and quitted it. True, indeed, your services are appreciated by unanimous consent: excepting only one or two, who would gladly have detained you, for the purpose of justifying their private revenge for having been taken in by you.'

"'You are the most infamous woman in the world,' said Mr. George Brummell of—notoriety.

"'Amen,' responded the Honourable Berkeley Craven, who was equally abusive at being left out of the Memoirs, as was Mr. Brummell for having figured in their background. Of course, I mean what I say—nothing more or less than that Brummell's very low birth placed him at the bottom of the list of fashionables. Oh! but somebody told me the other day that he had grown a very good man, in Calais, lives quiet, and puts up for the consulship; in which case we must let him alone; but I was going to tell you how I came to write a certain little tale called *Jealousy*, which shall soon be published. Mr. George Brummell having cut me dead, I wandered about disconsolate as our first pair after they were turned out of Eden, and being jealous of the favours he bestowed on green silk shoes, I was thinking of throwing myself off the ramparts, but I changed my mind, and laid the plan of a dreadful romantic and murderous fiction."

After 1825 no more was heard of Harriette Wilson—anyhow, in polite circles. She had married in that year at Paris a Frenchman named Rochfort. He predeceased her, and it is believed that she spent her last years in England, leading a quiet, respectable, and religious life. She died in 1846, at the age of fifty-seven.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DUCHESS OF YORK (1767–1820)

Princess Frederica of Prussia marries the Duke of York—Separation—The Duke the favourite son of George III—Description of the Duchess—The Duchess not intimate with the English Royal family—The Duchess and Mrs. Fitzherbert—A charming woman—She entertains at Oatlands Park, Weybridge—"Monk" Lewis—Beau Brummell's devotion to the Duchess—Charles Greville—The Duchess's love of dogs.

THE most popular lady of the royal family was the Duchess of York.

At the age of twenty-eight Frederick Augustus, Duke of York, had married Frederica Charlotte Ulrich Catherine, eldest daughter of Frederick William II, King of Prussia, who was four years his junior. The ceremony was performed at Berlin on September 29, 1791, and again in the following September at the Queen's House (now Buckingham Palace). An enthusiastic welcome was given to Her Royal Highness on her arrival in London. The alliance, however, was far from successful, and, to all intents and purposes, there was a separation after a few years, though, the royal couple resided under the same roof. The Duke, however, made his headquarters at Stable Yard, while Her Royal Highness rented Oatlands Park, Weybridge.

The Duke of York, who was born in 1763, was the second son of George II and Queen Charlotte. His father, in his capacity of Elector of Hanover, appointed him at the age of one year to the valuable see of Osnaburg —for many years he was known as the Bishop of Osnaburg. He enjoyed the title and the revenue until 1803.

In his early youth he was the constant companion of his elder brother, and the lads were educated together at Kew. The strict supervision under which they suffered in these days may possibly account, in part at least, for the rake-helly lives they led when they began to grow up. Frederick, who was created Duke of York and Albany in the year he came of age, had been put in the Army, and before he attained his majority had been gazetted major-general.

The Duke maintained his intimacy with the Prince of Wales, whose constant companion he was, except during those years when he was studying his profession abroad. His father was devoted to him, and even when George's brain was clouded used to murmur pathetically, "Freddie is my friend; yes, *he* is my friend." He was also very popular in society. Of his personal courage there was no question. Once in 1789 he stated publicly that he had heard words addressed to Colonel Charles Lennox (afterwards fourth Duke of Richmond and Lennox) to which any gentleman would have taken the strongest exception. The Colonel demanded an explanation, and His Royal Highness, waiving his rank, offered him "satisfaction." The duel took place at Wimbledon. Lennox fired and narrowly missed the Duke, who refused to fire—and so the matter ended.

Lord Malmesbury thought the Duchess "far from handsome, but lively, sensible, tractable, and formed to confer happiness on her husband." Mrs. Papendieck, Assistant-Keeper of the Wardrobes and Reader to the Queen, gave in her *Diary* a description of Her Royal Highness as she appeared when she first came to Courts: "The Duchess of York wore a white dress, elegantly embroidered, with her father's present of jewels and that also of her father-in-law, our King. She looked dignified

and royal, although by no means handsome, and the exaggerated style in which her head was dressed did not improve her appearance. The ordinary mode of dressing the hair at that date, with high *toupée*, large chignon, and pinned curls, was unbecoming to most people, and for a person of such diminutive stature as was Her Royal Highness it was specially so. She was well-proportioned, but of too small a size, with china-blue eyes, a quantity of light hair, powdered, and she was slightly marked with small-pox."

The Duchess did not like her relations by marriage, and she mixed with them as little as possible, though she never quarrelled with any one of the royal family. With the Prince of Wales, however, she was never on really good terms. The trouble between them arose owing to the connection between George and Mrs. Fitzherbert. What would be the attitude of the Duchess of York towards Mrs. Fitzherbert was a matter of much speculation in society. Everyone was very much on the watch for their first meeting, which took place at the Duchess of Cumberland's house. "The Duchess looked much better than that first day at Court," one who was present on this interesting occasion has recorded. "People in general were not presented to her, but several were by the Prince, Duke of York, etc., and the Duchess of Cumberland presented Mrs. Fitz. Both ladies squeezed their fans, and talked for a few minutes, and that was all, so this was the *first* meeting."

The Duchess came from a Court which was very strict as regards etiquette, and one where morganatic marriages were not in favour. She did not refuse to meet Mrs. Fitzherbert, but she would not treat her *en belle sœur*, as Mrs. Fitzherbert complained bitterly. The Prince was furious, and tried to force a quarrel on the Duke, who

was as innocent as a babe in this matter, and as helpless. "A breach between the Prince of Wales and him seems unavoidable, sooner or later," Creevey noted, "though the Duke's discretion will make it more difficult for the Prince to bring him to a quarrel than most people." No amount of coaxing or threatening could move the Duchess, and she persevered in her attitude to the end.

"The Duke of York came to see me at five, uneasy that the Duchess should be forced to sup at the same table as Mrs. Fitzherbert at the ball to be given by the Knights of the Bath on the first of June," Lord Malmesbury wrote in his Diary in 1803. "He talks it over with me . . . says the King and Queen will not hear of it. On the other side, he wishes to keep on terms with the Prince." After much discussion, a way out was found: one table was provided for the Prince and his friends; another for the Duke and Duchess, to which she invited her own company." The Prince never forgave the Duke and Duchess for what he regarded as a slight to Mrs. Fitzherbert and himself.

The Duke of York, on the other hand, was very friendly with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and when the Clarke scandal became public he found her most sympathetic. "A thousand thanks, my dear Friend," he wrote to her, "for your kind note. Be assured that I am truly sensible of your friendly anxiety about me. I am, thank God, tolerably well in health, and bear up, as much as I can, under present circumstances. As soon as I am able to free myself, you may depend upon your being one of the first persons upon whom I shall call." He signed himself, "Yours most affectionately."

A further trouble between the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of York was that she showed affection for the Princess Charlotte, with whom she stayed frequently at

Claremont ; and he had the impression that some of the waywardness exhibited by his daughter, with which at times he found it almost impossible to cope, arose from the encouragement given to her by his sister-in-law.

Everyone, except the royal circle, had a good word for the Duchess. One of her friends spoke of her charm of manner ; another of her excellent taste. Even Charles Greville had something pleasant to say about her, that she was clever, well-informed, and always preserved a certain dignity.

Raikes was devoted to her. " The Duchess," he wrote, " was a person of excellent taste, and a very nice discrimination of good breeding and manners, and the regard which that Princess entertained for Brummell was highly creditable to him. It may, indeed, be said in favour of the manners of that day that Her Royal Highness often remarked how superior they were to the tone of those that existed at the period of her marriage, when the Duke was surrounded by a set of *roués* who seemed to glory in their excesses, and showed a great want of refinement and courtesy in women's society. At the time Brummell visited at Oatlands, England had been for many years without a Court, and the limited circle that surrounded the Duke and Duchess of York, though differing scarcely from that of a private family, rendered it the only residence that was the scene of constant hospitality ; and it might have been appropriately termed a little Court, in which the affability on the one side, and the affectionate deference on the other, were equally remarkable. Here used to assemble, at the end of the week, Brummell and all the most agreeable men of the day, intimately acquainted with each other, and sincerely attached to their royal host and hostess. . . . Few characters in any situation of life could be placed in

competition with the late Duchess of York. She was not only a *très grande dame* in the highest acceptation of the term, but a woman of the most sound sense and accurate judgment, with a heart full of kindness, beneficence, and charity. The former was amply proved by the adroitness with which she so successfully avoided all collision with the cabals and *tracasseries* which for so many years unfortunately ruled in various branches of the royal family; and the latter was attested by the constant attachment of her friends and dependents, the gratitude of her poor neighbours during her life, and the undisguised grief of all at her death. Whatever clouds (if, indeed, they ever existed) obscured the earlier part of her marriage were in late times completely dispersed; and nothing could equal the respect and attention with which she was treated by the Duke, who rarely failed to consult her opinion on most questions of real importance to his own interests. To the distinguished manner belonging to her rank, and a proper sense of the dignity befitting her exalted position in the country, she added a simplicity of character and a general affability which placed every one at their ease and gave a peculiar charm to her society. Endowed by nature with a very superior mind, which had been highly cultivated and improved by books, she was at all times able to take the lead on any subject; her conversation was full of points, blended with great *naïveté*, and devoid of all sarcastic allusions; she had a very refined taste, and a great knowledge of the world; but contrary to all received opinions her study of mankind had never operated to check that feeling of general benevolence which formed the brightest gem of her character."

The Duchess was a good friend to all in need of kindness. She gave "Monk" Lewis the meed of admiration

that his vanity required. Thomas Raikes tells an amusing story in this connection. Lewis was once met coming in tears from the Duchess's drawing-room, and he said that the tears had their source in the kind and flattering things the Duchess had said to him, only to be consoled roughly with the soothing advice, "Never mind, perhaps she did not mean it."

For Brummell she had a very sincere regard. At the height of his fame he was a frequent visitor to Oatlands, where he was always welcome. Even his bitter quarrel with the Prince of Wales made no difference to his friendship with Her Royal Highness. He pleased her greatly by sending her as a birthday present a dog, which immediately captured her favour.

"On ne saurait être plus sensible que je le suis au souvenir obligeant que vous avez bien voulu me donner au jour de ma fête, et au charmant cadeau que le Duc m'a remis de votre part" (she wrote to him from Windsor, to thank him). "Recevez mes remercimens les plus sincères pour ce joli petit *chien*, c'est l'embleme de la *Fidelité*, j'aime à me flatter qu'elle sera de la continuation de notre amitié, à laquelle je vous assure que j'attache le plus grand prix.

'J'ai une toux de cimetière qui menace ruine; si elle ne m'a pas mis sous terre avant le commencement du mois prochain, je compte me rendre à Londres, dans ce temps-la, et un des motifs qui me fait envisager avec le plus de plaisir ce séjour est qu'il me procurera l'avantage de vous y rencontrer et de pouvoir vous réitérer moi-même combien je suis,

"Votre toute affectionnée amie et servante,

"F."

When Brummell was ruined by gambling, and had to fly the country in 1816 and take refuge at Calais, the Duchess kept up a correspondence with him.

" Londres, ce 26 *Avril*, 1817.

" Vous n'avez rien perdu à la lettre qui vous était destinée, et que Lord Alvanley a consignée aux flammes ; elle contenait seulement mes remercimens pour les charmants cadeaux que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer (dont je me suis parée le soir même de ma petite fête) et mes regrets que vous n'en étiez plus. Ces regrets se renouvellent journellement, et surtout les raisons qui en sont la cause. Croyez que personne ne sent plus la perte de votre société que je le fais, je n'oublierai jamais les momens agréables que je lui ai dûs, et tout ce qui pourrait me'n compenser serait la certitude de votre bonheur, pour lequel je ferai [les vœux] les plus sincères comme pour ce qui peut y contribuer le plus efficacement, me flattant que vous conservez toujours quelque souvenir de

" Votre toute affectionnée amie et servante,

" F."

" Oatlands, ce 29 *Septembre.*

" Vous avez une manière si agréable d'annoncer les plus mauvaises nouvelles, qu'elles perdent par là de leur désagremens, je ne puis ce-pendant que m'affliger avec vous de la perte de tous nos beaux projets de fête, qui s'evanouissent avec la perte de notre billet de loterie, dont je vous acquitte la dette ci-jointe, en y joignant les vœux les plus sincères que ceci puisse être le dernier mauvais tour que la Fortune puisse vous jouer, et que dans toutes les autres circonstances

de votre vie, elle puisse toujours vous être favorable. Ce sera me rendre justice que de vous persuader que personne ne peut s'intéresser plus sincèrement à votre bonheur et a tout ce qui vous concerne.

" Je n'ai rien à vous dire de ma solitude qui puisse exciter votre curiosité, n'y ayant vu personne de ceux qui vous intéressent depuis votre départ. J'espère que vous reviendrez bientôt dans ces contrées, et qu'il me sera permis de vous réitérer moi-même ici les assurances de l'amitié sincère et de la considération parfaite avec laquelle je suis.

"Votre toute affectionnée amie et servante,

" F."

Brummell was much in the Duchess's thoughts, and she did what she could to alleviate the monotony and troubles of his exile. She embroidered a table-cloth for him, gave him an easy chair, and each Christmas sent him a valuable gift. It is thought by some that she actually provided him anonymously with an annuity during the remaining years of her life. Brummell, on his part, began to decorate most elaborately a six-foot screen, which he intended to present to her: when he heard of her death he never touched it again. He showed his gratitude in a more substantial way. When he was penniless a publisher offered him a large sum of money if he would write his Memoirs, but, though at his wits' end, he refused point-blank. " I promised the Duchess of York," he explained, " that I would never publish any of mine during the lifetime of George IV and his brothers, and I am under so many obligations to her, and have such a deep respect for her generous and amiable conduct to me in our early friendship and since, that I would rather go to gaol than forfeit my word.

She is the only link that binds me in this matter." Later, he actually did go to prison for debt, but he adhered to his decision.

Oatlands became a centre of attraction. There were, however, drawbacks there, for those who were so fortunate as to be invited to the week-end parties. Greville, who was a frequent visitor, especially after he undertook the management of the Duke's stables, found much fault with the arrangements. "I went to Oatlands on Saturday. . . . We played at whist till four in the morning," he wrote. "On Sunday we amused ourselves with eating fruit in the garden, and shooting at a mark with pistols, and playing with the monkeys. I bathed in the cold bath in the grotto, which is as clear as crystal and as cold as ice. Oatlands is the worst-managed establishment in England; there are a great many servants, and nobody waits on you; a vast number of horses, and none to ride or drive. . . . We dine at eight, and sit at table till eleven. In about a quarter of an hour after we leave the dining-room the Duke sits down to play at whist (at five-pound points and twenty-five pounds on the rubber), and never stirs from the table so long as anyone will play with him. When anyone gives any hint of being tired he leaves off, but if he sees no sign of weariness in others he will never stop himself. He is equally well amused whether the play is high or low, but the stake he prefers is five pounds. The Duchess generally plays also at half-crown whist." The Duke's passion for cards was a trial to many of his friends, and there was a tacit understanding between Lord Yarmouth, Lord Alvanley, Lord Foley, Lord Worcester, Raikes, and a few others, that when His Royal Highness dined with any one of them, no suggestion of whist should ever be made.

The Duchess loved dogs, and carried her devotion so far that she had about a hundred of them at Oatlands, where she had a cemetery for those that died, and erected tombstones to their memory. She liked cats too. One day when she went to see "Monk" Lewis, his cat sat on her skirt, and her host came to remove it. "No, no, you shall not disturb her now," she protested. "Poor little ting! I do think she love me, and do not take from me any ting dat love me!" Indeed, she loved all animals. "Ah, *mein Gott*, yes, dey are so dependent on us for kindness and protection, and when dey make dere appeal in dere innocent language, I tink we ought to love dem, if only to awake de better part of our nature. Besides, dey are grateful for kindness, dey are sincere, dey are honest." "Monk" Lewis laughingly rejoined that if his cat saw a custard he would not be answerable for her honesty. "Poor ting! Poor little ting!" the Duchess said. "Dat is but dere nature. De dog, de cat, dey will snap and dey will bite; but how could I punish de poor ignorant ting, dat as no liberty of choice! I have many dog, as you know, but, though I vos delight in de attachment and de faith of my dog, I could not say de dog is *virtuous*—still, I welcome the sweet spirit of *affection* dat it is vin my regard. Ah! Master Luvise, me know dat de poor animal follow but dere nature, would Gott dat man so truly follow his—for *his* nature is *divine*."

The Duke and Duchess lived on good terms, and were fond enough of one another, though they went their own way, and had their own friends. When the Duchess died in 1820 the Duke, who lived another seven years, was deeply distressed. Nor was he the only one to mourn her. "She is extremely regretted all round Oatlands, as she gave up her whole time to the exercise of charity

and to the well-being of those around her, built cottages for those of her domestics who married, had a school which was under her protection," Greville wrote, on hearing that she had passed away. "Her hours were singular: she was read to most part of the night, and took her sleep late in the day. Several large dogs shared her apartment, and were often dirty companions, from the vicissitudes of life. The Duke and her were always on a friendly footing of acquaintance, and no Green Bag discussions."[1]

[1] This phrase arose out of the trial of Queen Caroline, when the papers relating to the case were enclosed in green bags.

CHAPTER XV

MARY ANNE CLARKE (1776-1852)

The Duke of York—His military career—Mary Anne Clarke—Her early days—She becomes the Duke's mistress—Her extravagance—Her lovers—Lloyd Wardle—Her illicit sale of commissions in the army—Discussion in the House of Commons—Peter Pindar's "Epistle to Mrs. Clarke"—The Duke resigns the office of Commander-in-Chief—The cynical attitude of Mrs. Clarke—*The Rival Princes*—Mrs. Clarke settles at Paris—Death of the Duchess of York—The Duke of York and the Duchess of Rutland—Stafford House.

THE Duke of York was more than reasonably fond of women, and he had innumerable affairs, the first of which occurred in his very early youth, when he was discovered by the King in the grounds of Kew Palace, sitting beside a rustic beauty employed in the royal kitchen assisting her in the operation of shelling peas. For some time the lovely Kate Novell lived under his protection. However, it was not until Mary Anne Clarke became his mistress that there was any serious scandal.

The Duke was then Commander-in-Chief. As a soldier in the field he had been far from successful. In 1793 he commanded the English army sent to Flanders to co-operate with the Austrians under the Prince of Coburg, and in this campaign he failed to capture Dunkirk. He was no more fortunate six years later when he was in charge of the Helder expedition. The caricaturists dealt with him savagely, and the lampoons were no less unkind.

The mighty Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men;
He marched them up to the top of the hill,
And he marched them down again;

And when they were up, they were up;
And when they were down, they were down;
And when they were only half-way up,
They were neither up nor down.

At home, however, the Duke did good work. There was much corruption in all departments of the Army, and he set himself the unpopular and strenuous task of weeding out the dishonest and incompetent administrators and officers, and for seven or eight years he worked hard and effectively. He improved the lot of the men. He discouraged favouritism. He won golden opinions from those best qualified to judge—and then in 1808 the Clarke scandal burst, and he had to resign.

Who Mary Anne Clarke was has never been satisfactorily settled. Her earliest biographer, Elizabeth Taylor, has it that her father was one Thompson, and that she was born in a slum off Chancery Lane. The story goes that, on the death of Thompson, her mother married a compositor called Farquhar, and that the son of Farquhar's master was attracted by Mary and sent her to a good school. Certainly she had, for those days, a good education. She was possessed of extraordinary good looks and charm, and apparently from her early age she had lovers. She herself has put it on record that she married a man called Clarke in 1794, when she was eighteen, by which time it is said that she was the mother of two children. It would appear that she was unfaithful to him. According to one account, she left him and went on the stage, and did well enough to be entrusted with the part of Portia at the Haymarket Theatre.

In or about 1805 she met the Duke of York. How they became acquainted is not known. Gronow has it that the Duke accosted her at Blackheath, and she did not repel his advances, although ignorant of his identity. Indeed, Gronow adds, she only found out who he was on

an evening when he took her to a theatre, and some one, supposing her to be the Duchess, addressed her as your Royal Highness.

It soon became known that she was the Duke's mistress; and she set up house at No. 18, Gloucester Place, not far from Marble Arch. There she lived in great splendour, regardless of expense. Her extravagance was, in fact, preposterous, considering that all she had to live on was an income of £1,000 a year from the Duke during pleasure—an income which it is certain was paid irregularly. On her kitchen she spent a couple of thousand pounds; for the dining-room she purchased the plate of the Duc de Berri, for which she paid, or owed, a small fortune. She had several carriages, eight or ten horses, and a score of servants. Further, she acquired a large house at Weybridge, so as to be near her royal lover when he was in residence at Oatlands Park; and this house was so large that it is said that oilcloth for the hall cost fifty-pounds!

How Mrs. Clarke managed at all is difficult to understand, but it is reasonable to assume that she obtained assistance from her other lovers, for she was no more faithful to the Duke than to another. One of these lovers was Lord Folkestone (afterwards third Earl of Radnor), another, according to Gronow, was Captain Gwillym Lloyd Wardle. Wardle certainly, as will be shown, had some connection with her. Gronow's story is at least circumstantial. Wardle, as he relates, was with Mrs. Clarke at Gloucester Place when the royal carriage drove up to the house. He, thinking it was the Duke, hid under or behind a sofa.

However, the visitor was one of the Commander-in-Chief's aides-de-camp, who proceeded to discuss with his hostess the secret sale of commissions in the Army, the proceeds of which went into the pockets of the lady and

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her colleagues. Wardle learnt from the conversation that, after the list of promotions had been arranged by the Duke, Mrs. Clarke, who often acted as his amanuensis, added names, and that he, being entirely without suspicion, signed the papers without examining them. It may here be mentioned, as proof of the connection between Wardle and Mrs. Clarke, that an upholsterer, Francis Wright, brought an action against him in July 1809 for furnishing the lady's house, and secured a verdict for a very considerable sum. Wardle publicly protested his innocence, and in the following December he proceeded against Mrs. Clarke and Wright for conspiracy, but failed to establish his case.

Considering the terms on which he was with Mrs. Clarke, it is necessary to search for a reason why he, of all people, raised the issue of the illicit sale of commissions in the House of Commons, where he sat as member for Okehampton. If he felt it was his duty to have the matter ventilated, it would have been natural, as well as more wise, in the circumstances, to have put up some one else to see it through. The only possible explanation is that he had quarrelled with Mrs. Clarke, or been dismissed by her, and was anxious, regardless of his reputation, to be revenged on her.

Anyhow, Wardle brought up the matter in the House of Commons in January 1809, after which there was nothing for it but to wash the dirty linen in public. "Peter Pindar" did not exaggerate the scandal that ensued when he wrote his "Epistle to Mrs. Clarke":

> Heavens, what a dire confusion beauty makes!
> The Horse Guards tremble, and old Windsor shakes.
> Like bees, the mob around St. Stephen's swarms;
> And every street and alley feels alarms:
> Men, women, coaches, gigs, each other jostle;
> And *thou* the cause of all this horrid bustle!

Hotels and tap-rooms sound with mingled din,
And every coffee-house is on the grin.
From morn to eve, from eve to midnight dark,
Naught strikes the ear but "Duke and Mistress Clarke!"
Nay, too, the parrot and the simple starling
Cry from their cages naught but "Duke and Darling."

At the beginning it looked as if the Duke had been more sinned against than sinning, and that the worst that could be said against him was that he had been careless. The King, indignant as he was, while deploring the "disgraceful connection" into which his son had entered, expressed his conviction that the Duke was innocent of any misconduct in his official capacity. The Duke's partisans at first felt sure that he would come out of this lamentable business without a stain on his character. They reckoned, however, without Mrs. Clarke, who, having nothing to lose, and, according to her own statement, a great deal to gain, gave away the game.

"The Duke of York's business has taken a very unpleasant shape," Earl Temple (afterwards created Duke of Buckingham) wrote on February 9. "The woman has taken a decided part against him, and tells everything she knows, a great deal that she does not know, and much more than the Duke can repel. The temper of the House is decidedly in the Duke's favour; this, added to the bad character of the principal witness, will certainly bring him off upon the most material points of the charge; but nothing can wipe off from the public mind the first impression of connivance, at least, which the bad character of the woman only tends to strengthen and confirm. In short, whatever the issue of the specific charges brought, I see plainly that the Duke is lost in public estimation. The woman is very clever, and completely foiled Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Attorney-General, in a very severe cross-examination of

three hours. William Adam made matters worse, by stating that the Duke had given her an annuity of £400, contingent upon the correctness of conduct. Will not his enemies say, and can his friends deny, that the annuity was hush-money, to continue so long as she held her tongue, and to cease the moment she began to talk? the payment did cease. All this is very bad, and at the present moment very mischievous."

Mrs. Clarke was completely mistress of herself, and absolutely undismayed when she appeared before the tribunal. Asked by the chairman, somewhat brutally, under whose protection she was now, "At present, sir, she replied, "I believe I am under *yours*." In her account of this episode on her life she wrote with the most brazen cynicism.

"I am of opinion that there is not a person in England at all acquainted with the proceedings of the House of Commons, with respect to the Duke of York, and my connection with Colonel Wardle and his party, who is so credulous as to believe what Colonel Wardle has lately endeavoured to make the people of England credit as a divine revelation: namely, that I incurred the exposure of myself, children, and family, together with abuse, anxiety of mind, and fatigue of person, during my examination in Parliament, from a purely patriotic zeal to serve the public," she said. "If there should be such a person in the country that indulges in such an opinion of my patriotism, he must be the most insane and weak man that ever lived. If I were to tell the same gross falsehoods which has issued from the immaculate Colonel Wardle, and compliment myself upon having appeared against the Duke of York, without any motives of interest beyond the gratification of serving the public, I am sure the intelligent reader would consider

me a most impudent hypocrite, and with great justice, for *if I had not been well satisfied of receiving the remuneration agreed upon* not all the Jacobinical parties in Europe should have introduced my letters and my person to the notice of Parliament."

The House of Commons, by 278 to 196 votes, acquitted the Duke of York of any corrupt practices. At the same time, though it was established that he had derived no pecuniary benefit from the sale of commissions, it was generally accepted that he had been cognisant of what had been going on. Spencer Perceval, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and shortly to be Prime Minister, declared, in an impressive speech: "I will stake my reputation upon it, that it is impossible that, after the result of the enquiry, any suspicion can attach to His Royal Highness." Public feeling, however, ran so high that it was considered advisable by the Duke and the Government that he should resign the office of Commander-in-Chief. He was succeeded by Sir David Dundas, but, when Dundas retired two years later, he was reappointed by the Prince Regent. The matter was raised in the House of Commons by Lord Milton, who moved a vote of censure on the Government for permitting the appointment, but this was defeated by a large majority.

Certainly Mrs. Clarke told the truth when she stated that she was not "a most impudent hypocrite." No woman has ever shown more effrontery: this effrontery was, in fact, part of her stock-in-trade. In the years following the enquiry she published a scandalous volume, the full title of which runs: "*The Rival Princes; or, A Faithful Narrative of Facts relating to Mrs. M. A. Clarke's Political Acquaintance with Colonel Wardle, Major Dodd, etc., etc., who were concerned in the Charges against the Duke*

of York, with a variety of Authentic and Important Letters and Curious and Interesting Anecdotes of Several Persons of Political Notoriety." Encouraged by the reception of this work, she let it be known that she had in active preparation a collection of letters which she had received from the Duke of York. The book was actually printed, but before it appeared Sir Herbert Taylor, at the instance of the Prince Regent and the Duke of York (to the latter he had been private secretary for several years), bought up the issue, and the letters, for a cash payment of £7,000 and a pension of £400 a year for life. All the copies were forthwith destroyed, except one, which was deposited at Drummond's Bank.

Mrs. Clarke met her Waterloo in 1813, when she was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for having uttered a libel on the Right Honourable William Fitzgerald (afterwards Baron Fitzgerald and Vesey) in connection with the Duke of York enquiry. After Waterloo, she settled at Paris, with her children, and there she remained, popular with a certain set, until her death in 1852 at the age of seventy-six.

Of course, after the scandal the Duke broke off his connection with Mrs. Clarke.

When the Duchess died there was a rumour that the Duke, although in his fifty-eighth year, might marry again in the hope of establishing the succession to the Throne, to which he was heir-presumptive. There was at least some basis for the rumour. "The Earl of Lauderdale was executor, it seems, to the Duchess," Creevey relates, "so, before the poor woman was buried, the Minister from the Elector of Hesse requested an audience of Lauderdale, the object of which was to say that, as the Duke no doubt would marry again, he had thought it his duty to mention that the Elector, his master, had

a daughter whom he thought well qualified to be the Duke's second wife, and, well-knowing Lauderdale's great influence with the Duke, he had judged it right to make this early application to him.

About a week after the Duchess's funeral Lauderdale mentioned this to the Duke, who immediately said: "This is the *second* application to me, for the King has communicated to me his wishes that I should marry again; but my mind is quite made up to do no such thing, and so I have given the King to understand." The Duke remained a widower, inspired thereto mainly because of his affection for the wife of the Duke of Rutland, who had been Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Frederick, fifth Earl of Carlisle, the friend and correspondent of George Selwyn. The Duke and Duchess were spoken of as "a pattern of juvenile sentiment"; and Lord Palmerston alluded drily to "the delight it was to the unsophisticated minds to see the Royal Duke and the Duchess meeting in the mysterious luxury of a first and refined affection." It was this lady who persuaded him to erect Stafford House (now Lancaster House), which, though unfinished at his death, involved him in such enormous expense (which he could not meet) and deep worry as may well have hastened his end. He died in 1827.

CHAPTER XVI

MRS. JORDAN (1762–1816)

Birth—Her mother and father—She goes on the stage—Her début—Comes to England—Appears at Drury Lane—Criticisms of Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt—Richard Ford—Marriage of her daughters—Becomes the mistress of the Duke of Clarence—Her replies to attacks in the Press—Her large income—Monetary difficulties—The Duke and Mrs. Jordan—The parting—The reasons for this—Miss Tylney Long—Miss Elphinstone—Miss Wykeham—Marriage of the Duke—His affection for the Fitzclarences—Mrs. Jordan in distress—She dies abroad.

MRS. JORDAN was born at Waterford on November 22, 1762. Her mother, Grace, one of the three daughters of the Rev. Dr. Phillips, married a Captain Bland. Grace Phillips had, like her sisters, gone on the stage, and the Bland family were strongly opposed to the marriage. They cut off supplies, and Captain Bland had to earn a precarious living on the stage. Ultimately, however, he yielded to the wishes of his parents, and applied successfully for the annulment of the marriage on the ground of nonage.

This is the story of the earlier biographers of Mrs. Jordan, but Joseph Knight pointed out that these statements have grave inherent improbabilities. He inclined to the theory that Bland was employed in some humble capacity in a theatre at Dublin or Cork. There is Mrs. Jordan's own authority for the statement that she began to earn her living at the age of fourteen; whether she was or was not, in or about 1776, assistant to a milliner in Dame Street, Dublin, is immaterial. What is certain is that in this year she went on the stage, making her début as Phœbe in *As You Like It* at the

Crow Street Theatre. After some time she became the mistress of Richard Daly, manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, and husband of Mrs. Lister, a popular and well-to-do actress and singer. Apparently she was frightened of Daly, and, although with child by him, ran away from Dublin to Leeds with her mother, brother, and sister.

At Leeds the Blands found Tate Wilkinson, the well-known actor, who was manager of the York Circuit, and had years before in Dublin known Dorothy's mother, who had played with him in *Othello*. Anxious to give a helping hand, he asked Dorothy what she could play—tragedy, comedy, or opera. To which question she replied, "All." She certainly justified her boast, in so far that she played and sang in all kinds of pieces, playing such different parts as Lady Teazle and Jane Shore. It would seem that Mrs. Jordan—as she now called herself—did not take her work very seriously, and that she was often troublesome in the theatre. As regards her merits as an actress, Yates described her as "a mere piece of theatrical mediocrity"; on the other hand, "Gentleman" Smith recommended her to the management of Drury Lane. The recommendation was accepted, and she made her first appearance there on October 18, 1785, as Peggy in *The Country Girl*. She was not at first conspicuously successful, for she was usually cast for tragic or sentimental parts: it was only when she was given comedy rôles and "breeches" rôles that she rose to the first rank of her profession.

Mrs. Alsop, was the daughter of Mrs. Jordan by Richard Daly. Born in 1782, she married in 1808 Thomas Alsop, a clerk in the Ordnance Office. Her theatrical career was brief, and she went to America with her husband, where she died in 1821.

Mrs. Jordan's morals were, to say the least, careless. There were almost certainly more than one or two love-affairs before she went to live with Richard Ford, a barrister. There was issue also of this connection. A daughter, Dorothea Maria, married in 1809 Frederick Edward March, of the Ordnance Office, a natural son of Lord Henry Fitzgerald. Another, Lucy, who was born about 1787, married Samuel Hawker, colonel of the 14th Dragoons, who later was promoted general and knighted. Mrs. Jordan and Ford seemed to have been happy enough together for a few years. Then, in 1790, the Duke of Clarence made overtures to her, and she gave Ford the choice of legalising their union or losing her. "Enquiry, however, could not fail to acquaint the Duke that Mrs. Jordan was generally supposed to be the wife of Mr. Ford, a barrister, the son of a proprietor of the theatre, though she retained as to the stage the theatrical name she bore at York," wrote her first biographer, Boaden, who knew her well. "The declared attachment of the Prince weighed at first no more with her than to take the opportunity of ascertaining whether Mr. Ford was sincere in his devotion to her, in which case she thought herself entitled to his hand, and, in fact, even upon a mere worldly estimate of the matter, a desirable match, in possession of a positive and progressive fortune, the honourable result of superior, indeed, unequalled talents. She at length required from Mr. Ford a definite answer to the proposal of marriage, and, finding that he shrunk from the test, she told him distinctly that her mind was made up, at least to one point, that, if she must choose between offers of *protection*, she would certainly choose those that promised the fairest; but that, if he could think her worthy of being his wife, no temptations would be strong enough to detach

her from him and her duties. Mr. Ford resigned her, I believe, with legal composure—and she accepted the terms held out by the Duke, and devoted herself to his interests and his habits, his taste and domestic pleasures. Whoever has had the happiness of seeing them together at Bushy saw them surrounded by a family rarely equalled for personal and mental grace; they saw their happy mother and honoured wife, in everything but the legal *title*, and uniformly spoke of the establishment at Bushy as one of the most enviable that had ever presented itself to their scrutiny." In return, it has generally been supposed, for giving up Mrs. Jordan, Ford was presently appointed a London magistrate, and was subsequently knighted.

The Duke of Clarence, who was now twenty-five years of age, at the age of thirteen entered the Navy as a midshipman. He served under Keith, Hood, and Nelson —the last of these admirals wrote appreciatively of him to Captain Locke in 1786, when His Royal Highness was captain of H.M.S. *Pegasus*. "In his professional life he is superior to nearly two-thirds, I am sure, of the list, and in attention to orders, and respect to his superior officer, I hardly know his equal. His Royal Highness keeps up strict discipline in his ship, and, without paying him any compliment, she is one of the finest ordered frigates I have ever seen." It is certain, however, that he was not popular with the officers who served under him.

The Duke had no liking for Court life, and, for a while, lived quietly at Richmond, "but he," as Horace Walpole wrote in 1789, "no wonder, at his age, is already weary of a house in the middle of a village, with nothing but a green short apron to the river, a situation only fit for an old gentlewoman, who has put out her knee-pans and

loves cards. He pays his bills regularly himself, locks up his doors at night, that his servants may not stop out late, and never drinks but a few glasses of wine. Though the value of crowns is mightily fallen of late at market, it looks as if His Royal Highness thought they were still worth waiting for. Nay, it is said, he tells his brothers he shall be king before either—this is fair, at least."

At one time, Mrs. Jordan's liaisons made her notorious with the theatre-going people, and her constant and repeated temporary retirements, owing to "the calls of maternity," made her unpopular. She was vigorously attacked in the Press, and more than one lampoon about her was printed and circulated. At last, however, she, in her turn, wrote to the papers, and protested strongly against the abuse that was being hurled at her.

Not content with this, Mrs. Jordan one night went down to the footlights, and delivered herself of the following speech :

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I should consider myself as totally unworthy of the distinct favour and approbation I have ever received from you if the smallest mark of your displeasure did not sensibly affect me. Give me leave to assure you that I never absented myself from the theatre but when compelled to it by a real indisposition. Ever since I have had the honour and happiness of appearing before you it has been my pride, my unremitting study, to endeavour to entertain and amuse you, and I trust I may while so employed consider myself as under your protection."

Mrs. Jordan unquestionably made a large income. For years her salary at Drury Lane was £30 a week—a sum then not inconsiderable. In the summer she used to go on tour, when she always played to packed houses, and so

realised a handsome profit. "My professional success through life has, indeed, been *most extraordinary*; and consequently attended with *great emoluments*," she wrote from Bath in 1809. "But from my first starting in life, at the early age of fourteen, I have always had a large family to support. My mother was a duty. But on *brothers* and *sisters* I have lavished more money than can be supposed; and more, I am sorry to say, than I can well justify to those who have a stronger and prior claim on my exertions. With regard to myself (as much depends on our ideas of riches), I have certainly enough; but this is too selfish a consideration to weigh one moment against what I consider to be a duty. I am quite tired of the profession. I have lost those great excitements, *vanity* and *emulation*. The first has been amply gratified, and the last I see no occasion for; but, still, without these it is a mere money-getting drudgery. The enthusiasm of the good people here is really ridiculous; but it brings 'grist to the mill,' and I shall, notwithstanding the great drawback of unsettled weather, clear, between this place and Bristol, from £800 to £900."

Mrs. Jordan was always in monetary difficulties. This was not due to extravagance, but to the calls on her, to which she always responded generously—indeed, lavishly. "I am sure," she wrote to a friend, "that you will be pleased to hear that our young friend Lucy is about to be married, much to my satisfaction, to Colonel Hawker, of the 14th Dragoons: he is a most excellent man, and has a very good private property: she will make the best of wives—a better girl never lived: it makes me quite happy, and I intend to give her the value of £10,000." It is difficult to realise how she contrived to find such sums of money with which to dower her daughters.

Certainly she had an allowance from the Duke, but

the provision he made for her was modest. When the King heard of the relations between the Duke of Clarence and Mrs. Jordan he was very much distressed.

"What, what? You keep an actress?" said His Majesty.

"Yes, Sir," replied William.

"How much do you allow her? What, what?"

"A thousand a year."

"A thousand a year!" cried George in astonishment. "What, what? That's too much. Give her five hundred. What, what, what?"

The story goes that the Duke suggested the reduction to Mrs. Jordan, and that she replied by sending him the bottom of a play bill, bearing the words, "No money returned after the rising of the curtain."

The Duke and Mrs. Jordan were very happy together. "With regard to the report of my quarrel with the Duke," Mrs. Jordan wrote, "every day of our *past* and present lives must give the lie to it. He is an example for half the husbands and fathers in the world, the best of masters and the most firm and generous of friends. I will, in a day or two, avail myself of your kind offer, to contradict those odious and truly wicked reports. I am so ill that I can do nothing myself, but must wait for the assistance of a good and clever friend, who is at present out of the way, and who (if truth is not quite scared out of the world) will endeavour to do away the ill impressions those reports were meant to make." Their only point of disagreement was the stage. The Duke was anxious that she should retire from it, and she did so far as to refrain from following her profession in 1806–7 and again in 1809–10. It was probably shortness of money that made her return to Drury Lane.

The connection between her and the Duke continued

for more than a score of years. In 1811 it came to an abrupt termination. While she was acting at Cheltenham in that year the Duke summoned her to a last meeting at Maidenhead—they never met again.

The reason given by Mrs. Jordan for the breaking off of the connection may be accepted, but, if it was due to the Duke's want of money, it is doubtful if this arose from the expense of maintaining his mistress and his children, for Mrs. Jordan at least contributed heavily to her own support, though probably not, as was at one time said, to his. As a matter of fact, handsome provision, to the total amount of £4,400 a year, was made for her on separation, though, in the event of her returning to the stage, the allowance for their many children was to revert to the Duke for administration.

It is more likely that the reason for the separation was that the Duke wanted to marry, and to marry an heiress. He was heavily in debt, and the Prince Regent showed no desire to come to the rescue. So, in 1814, he proposed to the wealthy Miss Tylney Long.

> And since no female can withstand
> The tempt'ng offer of your hand,
> On fair Miss T——y L——g bestow
> Table, equipage, and show.

Or, as another lampoonist, "Peter Pindar, junior," put it,

> Oh, where among our nobles will you meet
> A man so faithful, modest, and discreet
> As love-sick Clarence, amorous and gay,
> Who steals the ladies' tender hearts away ?
> Offers his hand to Long, short, fair, and brown,
> And gains among the females great renown.

Two females at least could withstand the honour, and, to show that she was not to be persuaded, Miss Long engaged herself without delay to William Pole Wellesley,

Mrs. Jordan

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afterwards fourth Earl of Mornington, whom she espoused in the following year.

Undaunted, the Duke proposed to Miss Elphinstone, who would none of him. Then to Miss Wykeham, who had inherited the great estates of Lord Wenham in Oxfordshire. His wooing was blunt. He told her he had not a penny in the world, but, if she would like to be Duchess of Clarence, and perhaps Queen of England, he placed himself at her disposal. "There is a grand emotion in the royal family, and with some reason," Freemantle wrote to the Duke of Buckingham. "The Duke of Clarence has thought fit to propose to Miss Wykeham, who has accepted him. The Prince, accompanied by the Duchess of Gloucester, went to Windsor on Tuesday to inform the Queen of the happy event, who was, of course, most outrageous. The Council have sat twice upon the business, and it is determined, as I understand, to oppose it." Pressure was brought to bear, and the engagement was broken off. In 1818 he married Adelaide, eldest daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen.

If the Duke of Clarence dismissed Mrs. Jordan, he remained all his life the devoted father of their ten children. When he ascended the throne as William IV he created the eldest son a peer, and gave the other sons and daughters rank and precedence as the younger children of a marquis. Besides, he granted them pensions, and gave some of them lucrative posts. George Fitzclarence, who was born in 1794, was created Earl of Munster. He went into the Army, rose to be major-general, and married a daughter of the Earl of Egremont. He was appointed Governor and Captain of Windsor Castle. Lord Adolphus entered the Navy, and from 1830 was captain of the royal yacht, which position he retained until he was promoted to flag rank in 1853. Lord

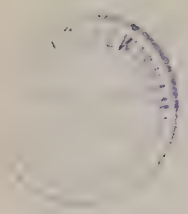
Frederick became a general; Lord Augustus, Rector of Mapledurham, and a Canon of Windsor; Henry went with the 27th Foot to India, where he died in 1817; Lady Sophia married Lord de l'Isle and Dudley, and was made Housekeeper of Kensington Palace. Lady Mary, who was appointed Housekeeper of Windsor Castle, became, in 1814, the wife of General Charles Richard Fox, a son of the third Lord Holland and his wife before their marriage. Elizabeth married the Earl of Erroll, who was appointed Ranger of Windsor Park, with Pembroke Lodge as a residence. One of the daughters of this marriage married Lord Fife, father of Edward VII's son-in-law. Lady Augusta married, first, the Hon. Kennedy Erskine, and, second, Lord John Frederick Gordon, a son of the Marquis of Huntly; and Amelia became the wife of the ninth Viscount Falkland.

Queen Adelaide was fond of the Fitzclarences, and liked to have them about her. Queen Victoria, on her accession, however, thought that they held too many posts about the Court, and wished to remove some of them, until she learnt that if she did they would have to be heavily compensated.

In the summer of 1815 Mrs. Jordan went to Paris. Her mind had now become unhinged, and she was under the impression that she had to hide herself. She moved from place to place, and stayed under different names. She died in poverty and neglect on July 15, 1816, and was buried at St. Cloud. In his last years the thoughts of William IV dwelt on Mrs. Jordan, and he ordered Chantrey to execute a bust to be set up in Westminster Abbey. He chose the inscription, "To Dora Bland, by one who loved her," but subsequently he directed the sculptor only to give the name. The bust was never placed in the Abbey, but it was, in the middle of the last

century, at Mapledurham, of which place one of the Fitzclarences was rector.

On his deathbed the King sent for his children and said something to each of them. He had insured his life for £40,000, and this amount, and a large sum he had inherited from George IV, he left to be divided among them. He had no wish for them to be dukes or duchesses, like the children of Charles II, but "he wished them to be worthy gentlemen and ladies, and hoped they would abstain from all royal pretensions."



CHAPTER XVII

QUEEN CAROLINE (died 1821)

The Princess of Wales goes abroad—Her suite—Her travels—The Order of St. Caroline—Italian members of her Household—Bartolomeo Pergami—His appearance and manner—His family—Caroline's indiscretions arouse comment at home—The Milan Commission—Its report temporarily shelved—The accession of George IV—Will the Queen return?—The King insists on divorce proceedings being instituted—The Queen's name omitted from the Liturgy—Dr. Parr and the "Bidding Prayer"—Caroline returns—A Bill of Pains and Penalties—The Italian witnesses—The trial in the House of Lords—"Go, and sin no more"—The Bill withdrawn—"Regina still, in spite of him"—Brougham and the advocate's duty—The coronation—Death of the Queen—The funeral.

WHEN, after eight years of incessant persecution, the Princess of Wales, in dire need of rest and change, went abroad, she had at the time no definite plans as to where she would go, or how long she would remain away. She was, however, determined immediately to return to England should any further proceedings be taken against her by the Prince Regent or on his behalf, and, anyhow, of course, on the death of George III. On August 9, 1814, travelling under the style of the Duchess of Cornwall, she sailed from Worthing, and went, so quickly as might be, to Brunswick to see her brother, the reigning Duke, with whom she stayed for awhile.

Among those who accompanied Her Royal Highness were Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Lady Elizabeth Forbes, her Ladies-in-Waiting; Sir William Gell and Anthony Butler St. Leger, her Chamberlains; Captain Hesse, her Equerry; and Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Holland. Her adopted son, William Austin, was one of the party. Soon after, St. Leger having to return to England, he

was replaced by the Hon. Keppel Craven, son of the Lady Craven, who afterwards became Margravine of Anspach.

It is unnecessary to follow Caroline on her travels during those six years. She roamed through Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. She visited the Near East, and proceeded to Egypt. At Jerusalem in 1816, following the example of other royal personages, she founded an Order of Knighthood, the membership of which was limited to those who accompanied her to the Holy Land. Bartolomeo Pergami was appointed Grand Master, and he and William Austin were created hereditary Knights, and Captain Howman and Dr. Mochetti non-hereditary Knights. Anything more absurd than this Order can scarcely be conceived.

The original members of the Princess's suite had, perforce, one by one to leave her, being called home by family ties or matters of business. They were replaced by Italians. This was the more unfortunate because her footsteps were dogged by the Prince Regent's spies, eager to gather evidence against her. That she was, however, aware of this is clear from a sentence in a letter which she entrusted one of these to deliver, and, as a spy would not be a spy if he did not read correspondence that passed through his hands, it is legitimate to wonder what he thought when he came to the sentence: "The bearer of this letter is a person who never speaks the truth; he is a spy of the cabal."

When Caroline was at Milan late in 1814 she asked Sir William Gell to engage a courier in place of one who had left her service. Gell enlisted the good offices of the Marquis Ghisiliari, Grand Chamberlain to the Emperor of Austria, who recommended for the post one Bartolomeo Pergami (or Bergami), who had served in the

campaign of 1812–14 under General Pino. Pergami was not the low-born scamp that it was presently endeavoured to make him out. He was a soldier of fortune, who had fallen on evil days, and, when recommending him, the Marquis expressed the hope that his protégé might later be promoted to a more responsible post.

The appointment was made, and, as it happened, was most unfortunate.

Very soon after Pergami joined the household of the Princess rumour had it that he became her lover. He was a very striking figure. "A man about five feet eleven inches in height, of a decidedly military aspect, large mustachios and whiskers, dark complexion and eyes, a bold but agreeable countenance, of robust form, and altogether of most prepossessing and gentlemanly appearance"—so runs one account. "Six feet high, a magnificent head of black hair, pale complexion, mustachios which reach from *here to London*. Such is *the stork*," Lady Charlotte Campbell described him; while Karoline Bauer, who knew more about men than most, wrote of him as "very tall and broad-shouldered, with dark, fiery Italian eyes, black hair, and an arrogant smile upon his broad face. He had something savage and vulgar in his face and his whole deportment."

It goes without saying that the Princess's conduct was indiscreet. Pergami had a beautiful young daughter, Victorine, who shortly came to live with him, and the Princess of Wales, with her love of children, did everything in her power to keep the girl with her. It is to be feared that Pergami took advantage of this desire. Anyhow, Caroline promoted him, first Equerry, and then Chamberlain. She obtained for him the military order of a Knight of Malta, and purchased for him the Sicilian title of Baron della Francini. She saw to it that at

Jerusalem he was invested Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, and, as has been said, she named him Grand Master of her own order of St. Caroline. Not content with this, she surrounded herself with members of his family. His brother Louis became her Major-domo ; another brother, Valotti, formerly Under-Prefect at Cremona, she made Controller ; and his sister, the Countess Oldi, was attached to her suite as a Lady-in-Waiting.

Lord Spencer said that the very openness of these proceedings of the Princess of Wales cried aloud her innocence, but that certainly was not the general impression in England. It may well be that the accounts were embellished, but evidently there was enough that was true to make her friends uneasy. There were rumours that proceedings against her were about to be instigated, but Brougham did not credit this. " The accounts of the Princess of Wales are worse and worse ; she embarked on the 17th of November for Palermo, *courier* and all," he wrote to Lord Grey, December 5, 1815. " Captain Briggs volunteered taking her, and if they have evidence against her, I should think he may bring her home, and not to Palermo. If they have not, the voyage may furnish it. . . . My opinion is, that they will be afraid to touch her—at least until they have the evidence of *English witnesses,* for no Italian would be believed ; but the voyage may supply the defect in their case."

Even Lady Charlotte Campbell was perturbed. However, she was somewhat comforted to receive from Como in 1817 the following letter from a friend : " I have seen the Princess of Wales. To my infinite surprise Her Royal Highness wrote and desired me to wait upon her yesterday, which I did accordingly, and found her looking well, but dressed in the oddest mourning I ever saw : a white

gown, with bright lilac ribbons in a black crape cap! She was gracious in her manner towards me, and spoke friendly of Lady——, which I was glad to hear, as by all accounts she was much displeased with her for leaving her service. But if she was angry, her wrath is at an end. I have often observed with admiration that the Princess never *retains* any revenge or unkind feelings long, even towards those who most deeply wrong her. She soon forgives what she considers slights or treachery towards her, which is a noble trait, and a rare one, and which ought always to be mentioned in her honour. . . . I dined accordingly last evening with Her Royal Highness. The Comtesse Oldi sat at table, but her brother *did not.* The Princess talked sensibly, and cautiously I should say, and appeared in very calm spirits. I watched the attendants closely, and could not discover any want of proper respect in their manners, etc., towards her. Perhaps they were on their guard before a stranger; but certainly, as far as I could see, they were as well-behaved as possible. The Comtesse Oldi seems a stupid silent woman. Her appearance is not particular in any way. The Princess's apartments are comfortable, and altogether I was agreeably disappointed; for I own, from all I had heard, I expected to find things very different from what I did."

The spies already referred to, to justify their existence, sent home incriminating reports. As these could scarcely be acted upon without corroboration, the Baron Frederick d'Ompteda, Hanoverian Envoy at the Vatican, was employed by Lord Stewart, British Minister at Vienna, to make independent enquiries. This gentleman contrived to worm his way into the confidence of Her Royal Highness, and he did his best to earn his reward by sending mendacious accounts to London.

On the strength of these, and of gossip generally, the "Milan Commission," as it has come to be called, was appointed. It began operations at Milan in September 1818, and collected evidence, which was not always too carefully sifted. It was presided over by Sir John Leach, Vice-Chancellor of England. The enquiry cost £30,000, an amount which would be truly amazing, if it were not borne in mind that large sums of money were expended on securing perjured evidence. The whole business was so evidently disgraceful that, when the report of the Commission was placed in the hands of the Government, it was decided, after consideration, to take no action on it.

In the middle of February 1820 information reached the Princess at Leghorn that George III had died on January 29, and that she was now Queen of England. She was not then, or indeed ever, informed officially of the change in her state. Foreign Governments were, of course, notified of the accession of George IV, but they were particularly requested by the Ambassadors and Ministers accredited to their Court not to recognise his Consort. Thus, when at Rome, after hearing the tidings, she asked Cardinal Consalvi, Secretary of State, for a guard to be placed at the doors of her palace, only to receive the following reply:

"The royal person, who has now come to Rome, is not announced as the Princess of Wales, but as the Queen of England, and for this the guard is requested. But as no communication has been made to His Holiness's Government by the Government of His Majesty the King of England and Hanover upon the change that has taken place, nor the rank of the said royal person, the Papal Government does not know that the Queen of England is in Rome, and in consequence cannot grant a guard to

the same. Whenever the Government of His Holiness may receive from that of His Majesty the King of England and Hanover the usual notification upon the change that has taken place with the royal person in question he will consider it an imperious duty to pay to the Queen of England all the honours due to her."

Everywhere in England the question was being asked, Will the Queen return? The matter was debated everywhere; and heavy bets were made at the clubs as to what would happen if she did come. Walter Scott was in no two minds about it. "I say, then, as to the King and Queen, I venture to think, that whichever strikes the first blow will lose the battle," he wrote to Lord Montagu. "The sound, well-judging, well-principled body of the people will be much shocked at the stirring of such a hateful and disgraceful question. If the King urges it unprovoked, the public feeling will put him in the wrong; if he lets her alone, her own imprudence, and that of her hot-headed adviser, Harry Brougham, will push on the discussion; and take a fool's word for it, as Sancho says, the country will never bear her coming back foul with the various kinds of infamy she has been stained with, to force herself into the throne. On the whole, it is a discussion most devoutly to be deprecated by those who wish well to the royal family."

The King struck the first blow. Almost his first step after succeeding to the throne was to insist that divorce proceedings against his Consort should be instituted without delay. Ministers were entirely opposed to any such step. They were far from satisfied with the evidence that had been collected at Milan. They remembered the scandal of the "Delicate Investigation," and the perjury with which it had been associated. And now,

as they pointed out to his Majesty, the testimony against the Queen upon which they would have to rely was "almost exclusively of the evidence of foreigners, most of them not above the rank of menial servants, or that of master and attendants in hotels, wholly unacquainted with the English language, and some of the former class standing in the questionable situation of having been dismissed from Her Royal Highness's service."

The King was adamant. If, he said, in effect, Lord Liverpool was not prepared to advise him to proceed by way of divorce, then his determination was taken; he would change his Government; and, further, so resolved was he on this course, that, if he could not form a Government that would so advise him, it was his intention to go to Hanover, and stay there.

After nine or ten days of acute controversy, a compromise was effected. Lord Liverpool undertook to bring in a Bill of Pains and Penalties, but only if, and when, the Queen returned to England. He did consent however, to the omission of her name from the Liturgy—whereby hangs an amusing story. Many clergymen resented the omission, and among them Dr. Parr, who found a way out. "If you were a parson I should raise a laugh by telling you that our most loyal Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London were guilty of a strange oversight when they countersigned the order for omitting the name of the Queen in the Liturgy," he wrote to his friend, "Coke of Norfolk." "We have in the Church what is called a Bidding Prayer, and you may learn from any Cantab or any Oxonian that it is used in the University Church before sermon. It was prepared for the use of all churches when I was a boy: my orthodox pastor used it in his pulpit at Harrow. Our orthodox wiseacres somehow or other forgot this

prayer when the King and Royal Family made a figure; and, therefore, having no directions to the contrary, I boldly pray for our Gracious Queen Caroline—and by strict construction of law I should be guilty of censure if I did not pray for her."

The omission of the name of the Queen from the Liturgy was a folly that had far-reaching consequences, for it brought about just those happenings that the Government were so anxious to avoid: Caroline, very naturally, regarded it as branding her, without trial, as guilty. Her fighting spirit was aroused. But for that she might have been induced to remain abroad, and the washing in public of all the dirty linen might have been avoided, for even Brougham, now her Attorney-General, begged her to stay out of the country.

"If she can venture to come here, she is the most courageous lady I ever heard of," said Lord Chancellor Eldon; but Caroline's courage was never at any time in doubt. She arrived at Dover on June 6, 1820, and her progress to London was in the nature of a triumphal procession. The love of fair play manifested itself everywhere, and the Court and the Government were thoroughly alarmed. Even the Guards showed signs of insubordination—which caused Henry Luttrell to remark drily, "The extinguisher is taking fire." "Peter Pindar" indited some of his most venomous lampoons upon the King, and a young Cambridge undergraduate, Thomas Babington Macaulay, wrote a sorry song of welcome, which concluded,

"Thank Heaven, our Queen is come."

As no royal palace in London had been placed at her disposal, Caroline stayed a few days at Alderman Wood's home, No. 77, South Audley Street, and then went to

Lady Anne Hamilton's, No. 22 Portman Street. Addresses from the City of London and other corporations rained in on her, and crowds waited patiently for her to appear, when they burst out into uproarious cheering.

If young Macaulay was delighted by the return of Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Government were far from happy, for it had now to redeem its pledge to the King. On the day the Queen landed in England Lord Liverpool, in the House of Lords, and Lord Castlereagh, in the House of Commons, presented a message from the King inviting Parliament to "adopt that course of proceeding which the justice of the case, and the honour and dignity of his Majesty's crown, may require." Papers relating to the conduct of the Queen since her departure were laid upon the table in green bags.

In the Commons there was an acrimonious debate. The Hon. H. G. Bennet voiced the general view when he declared that he could scarcely credit the statement that "a British Ministry, without the authority and consent of Parliament, had dared to call upon the Queen of Great Britain to divest herself of the title she holds by the same right as the King himself hold his title, for a bribe of £50,000 a year—a bribe to be given to a person against whom, if the statements circulated against her are true, is not only unworthy of being the Queen of England, but of being allowed to place her foot upon its shores." "There are no words," he added, "strong enough to convey an adequate impression of such a proposition." "We are now," said Creevey, "to have a prosecution founded on the result of an unsuccessful menace and an unaccepted bribe."

The country divided itself into two camps. The popular feeling was almost solid for the Queen. William Cobbett, who was still a great power in the land, hearing

that the Government was still offering the £50,000 a year, the frigate for travelling, and abroad the honours due to the Queen of England, begged her, in a long series of letters, not to give way and to "beware of insidious and perfidious advice."

Lord Liverpool, on July 5, introduced in the House of Lords "A Bill entitled an Act to deprive Her Majesty Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the Title, Prerogatives, Rights, Privileges, and Exemptions of Queen Consort of this Realm, and to dissolve the marriage between His Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth." The charge, put briefly, was "most unbecoming and degrading intimacy with Pergami."

"If my life would have satisfied your Majesty, you should have had it on the sole condition of giving me a place in the same tomb with my child; but, since you would send me dishonoured to the grave, I will resist the attempt, with all the means that it shall please God to give me." Thus wrote Caroline to the King, in a letter which greatly heartened her supporters.

As the day of the trial in the House of Lords approached the excitement grew more and more intense. Members of the Government believed that they could prove the case. Byron, from Ravenna, sent a warning note: "You must not trust Italian witnesses. Nobody believes them in their own courts. Why should you? For fifty or a hundred sequins you may have any testimony you please, and the Judge into the bargain." The attitude of the mob to these witnesses was so threatening that they had to be taken under escort by water to Westminster, and there guarded by a strong military force in the neighbouring streets and a man-of-war on the river side. So obsessed was society of all ranks with the trial, that Lord Holland, weary to death of the subject, declared he should go and

live with the witnesses, who alone, it was said, did not talk of the Queen.

The proceedings in the House of Lords began on August 7—the trial, it is usually called, although in form it was an examination of the truth of the recitals set forth in the preamble of the Bill of Pains and Penalties. There was, of course, a great array of counsel. For the Queen appeared Brougham and Denham, who, as Creevey said, "damnably overweighted" the Law Officers of the Crown, Sir Robert Gifford and Sir John Copley. Creevey, who was present at the first sitting, sent Miss Ord excellent descriptions of the Queen's appearance on the occasion :

"To describe to you Her Majesty's appearance and manner is far beyond my powers. I had been taught to believe that she was as much improved in looks as in dignity of manners ; it is therefore with much pain I am obliged to observe that the nearest resemblance I can recollect to this much-injured Princess is a toy which you used to call Fanny Royds. There is another toy of a rabbit and cat whose tail you squeeze under its body and then out it jumps in half a minute off the ground into the air. The first of these toys you must suppose to represent the person of the Queen ; the latter the manner by which she popped all at once into the House, made a *duck* at the throne, another to the peers, and a concluding jump into the chair which was placed for her. Her dress was black figured gauze, with a good deal of trimming, lace, etc. ; white veil so thick as to make it very difficult for me, who was as near to her as any one, to see her face ; such a lack of variety and inequality of ground as you never beheld ; with a few straggling ringlets on her neck, which I flatter myself from their appearance were not Her Majesty's own property. She squatted into her chair

with such a grace that the gown is at this moment hanging over every part of it—both back and elbows."

The Queen attended the House of Lords every day, her progress to Westminster being impeded by vast crowds cheering her to the echo. "The Government is stark staring mad," Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, Black Rod, declared: and he mentioned, as an instance of their folly, that they had wished to prevent him from receiving the Queen at the door of the House of Lords as Queen.

The first witness for the prosecution was Theodore Majocchi, who had been employed in the household of the Queen abroad, and when he appeared there was a dramatic moment. "*Traditore*" ["traitor"], cried Her Majesty, and abruptly quitted the House. His evidence seemed damning, but Brougham, cross-examining, soon disposed of it. As question followed question Majocchi's nerve gave way, and soon he only replied, "*Non mi ricordo*" ["I do not remember"]. "*Non mi ricordo*" became a catch-word throughout the country, and more than one set of humorous verses was written around the phrase. Soon it was clear to everyone that the Italian had perjured himself. No one doubted that he had been suborned by the "Milan Commission." The exposure was a terrible blow to the Government.

One by one, by the ingenuity of Brougham, the Italian witnesses were exposed. Thus, Cucchi stated that at Trieste he had seen Pergami three or four times, about eight o'clock in the morning, coming out of the Queen's bedroom, and that the Queen remained six days at Trieste; it was proved that her Majesty spent one day and night at Trieste. Again, Raggazoni declared that he had from a certain spot witnessed an act of impropriety between the Queen and Pergami; it was proved that from that spot, even if it had occurred, he

could not have seen it. Yet once more, Sacchi gave evidence that on a journey from Rome to Sinigaglia the Queen and Pergami travelled alone in a carriage, and that he, riding on horseback, saw them embracing; it was proved that in the carriage were also the Countess Oldi and Pergami's daughter Victoria; that the Countess sat between the Queen and Pergami; and that Sacchi had preceded the royal party by two hours.

In fact, the witnesses were too eager to earn their blood-money. When all the witnesses for the prosecution had been examined, "As the evidence now stands," Denman said to Brougham, "we are clearly entitled to an acquittal in any Court."

The incident on which the prosecution relied most largely for condemnation was that the Queen, on the polacca that conveyed her, after her visit to the Holy Land, from Jaffa, slept under the same tent on deck as Pergami. This at first sight certainly looked compromising enough, but it was contested that, the small vessel being manned by a mixed crew of Italian and Greek seamen not to be relied on in case of sudden danger, it was desirable that Her Majesty should have some reliable male attendant close at hand. Also, it was proved that both parties were fully dressed. The very openness of the incident convinced many of its innocence, but it undoubtedly made a definite impression on the waverers.

This was the Government's first considerable score, but the satisfaction they derived from it was soon discounted. On October 13 Brougham expressed a wish further to cross-examine a witness for the prosecution, Rastelli. There was immediately utter consternation among the Crown Council. Then the Attorney-General stated that, without his knowledge, Rastelli had been

sent by John Allan Powell (the agent of the "Milan Commission") with despatches to Italy to assure the relations of the witnesses of their safety. Of course, no one accepted this explanation; its absurdity was patent on the face of it. The fact was, that Powell had sent him secretly to Milan to collect further evidence, trusting he would not be recalled to the witness-box, or that he would be back before that happened.

Who gave away the secret of Rastelli's absence is not known, but Brougham used the incident to the utmost advantage, and found support on all sides. Lord Chancellor Eldon declared that it was "a most ill-timed and ill-judged proceeding"; Lord Grey would not allow that it was ill-judged, he proclaimed it "most irregular"; the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, admitted that it was "highly culpable"; while Lord Holland considered that "*a prima facie* case had been made out of a conspiracy to pervert justice." The point that was made by the defence was that, even if Rastelli returned, he would return prepared, which would make all the difference.

The question was, should Brougham—which meant the defence as a whole—refuse to proceed? It was generally agreed that he would have been within his rights. However, he decided to go on. He knew by this time that the Bill would never become law, and he had it in his mind, probably, that the rejection of the Bill might result in a change of Government.

As Brougham had opened the case for the Queen, so Denman summed up the case for her in a most eloquent speech. In his peroration, however, he made a terrible blunder.

"If your lordships have been furnished with powers which I might almost say scarcely Omniscience itself

possesses to arrive at the secrets of the female, you will think that it is your duty to imitate the justice, beneficence, and wisdom of the benignant Being, who, not in a case like this, where innocence is manifest, but when guilt was detected, and vice revealed, said: 'If no accuser can come forward to condemn thee, neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.'"

This extraordinary inadroit reference to the woman taken in adultery gave Denman the worst moments of his life, as, indeed, he admitted. "Not that the subject was unfit to be touched," as he said, "for it could not fail to have some effect on persons possessing religious feelings; but it ought not to have formed the concluding sentence, and might have been more guardedly introduced and more dexterously softened off." The supporters of the Crown case were delighted, and made the most of it. A wag wrote:

> Gracious Queen, we thee implore,
> Go away, and sin no more;
> But if that effort be too great,
> Go away—at any rate.

On November 6 came the division on the second reading: 123 peers declared themselves "Content," 95 "Non-Content," a majority of 28 in favour of the Bill. Two days later arose the question of the retention of the divorce clause: 129 "Content," 67 "Non-Content." This large majority did not, however, really represent the feeling of the Lords, because it was swelled by many supporters of the Queen, who knew that by retaining the divorce clause the Bishops, and many churchmen besides, being opposed to divorce, would vote against the Bill. On November 10 was the division on the third reading: 108 for, and 99 against the Bill—a majority only of nine.

"There's an end of your Bill," said Brougham cheerfully. "The majority is with the members of the Ministers and high officers in this House, and it would never do to pass such a Bill as this only by their votes."

This the Government realised, and the Prime Minister rose and moved that the question "'that this Bill do now pass,' be altered to 'this day six months.'" That was the end.

"*Regina* still," said Her Majesty, signing a paper; "*Regina* still in spite of him."

It was as well that the matter ended as it did, for Brougham had been determined to fight for his royal client to the last ditch. He held that it was his duty, as her advocate, to go to any lengths to secure a verdict. "An advocate, by the sacred duty which he owes to his client, knows, in the discharge of that office, but one person in the world, that client and none other," he told the House of Lords. "To save that client by all expedient means—to protect that client at all hazards, and costs to all others, and, among others, to himself—is the highest and most unquestioned of his duties; and he must not regard the alarm, the suffering, the torment, the destruction, which he may bring upon any other. Nay, separating even the duties of a patriot from those of an advocate, and casting them, if need be, to the wind, he must go on, reckless of the consequences, if his fate it should unhappily be to involve his country in confusion for his client's protection."

Brougham told the House that at present he did not think it necessary to use the weapon that he held in reserve, and that he would not do so unless he felt bound to recriminate. When the Duke of Portland told the Duke of Wellington that it was undesirable that the Bill should pass the Lords because of the recrimination that

would undoubtedly follow when the Bill was debated in the Commons, "The King," said Wellington, "is already degraded as low as he can be." What the Government feared was not attacks on the King's morality, his *affaires* with Lady Jersey and the rest: all this was Punchinello's secret; the intrigues had long been the stock-in-trade of "Peter Pindar" and the lampoonists of the day. Brougham had a stronger card to play—one that might be so far-reaching in its effect that he thought it proper duly to announce in advance that he might feel himself compelled to play it, whatever the consequences might be. This was nothing less than to impeach the King's title. Brougham intended to prove that George, when Heir-Apparent, had married Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic: the penalty for which, under the Act of Settlement, was that the offender forfeited the Crown, "as if he was naturally dead."

Of folly the Queen had certainly been convicted out of the mouths of her own witnesses. It is undeniable that many of those who stood by her had believed her guilty of serious offences, but as the case opened, and the evidence of the Crown witnesses was reputed, their opinion changed. "Wonders will never cease," Creevey exclaimed on October 6. "Upon my soul, this Queen must be innocent after all." Denman came to regard her as "the most wronged and insulted of womankind"; and Brougham, who at the beginning had believed the charges against her, soon came to declare, on his honour, his faith in her innocence.

The Court circle held its peace; it did not offer congratulation to the Queen, but condolence to the King. The people generally, however, were in a ferment of joyous excitement. Vast crowds in London and the great provincial cities paraded the streets shouting,

"God save the Queen." Her Majesty, in spite of the protest of the Dean, went in state to St. Paul's to offer thanks for her delivery from the peril that had threatened her. Deputations came from all over the country to Brandenburgh House, Fulham, where Caroline was now staying, to present addresses of congratulation. Her triumph was complete.

George IV, sulking in his tents, however, was determined to remain to the end petty. He could not even now allow her name to be inserted in the Liturgy. He refused absolutely to consent to her taking any part in the Coronation, or even to permit her to be present at that ceremony. The Prime Minister found himself in an awkward position owing to the King's obstinacy, and reluctantly he had to write to the Queen : "The King has commanded Lord Liverpool to say in answer that it is His Majesty's prerogative to regulate the ceremonial of his Coronation in such manner as he may think fit ; that the Queen can form no part of that ceremonial, except in consequence of a distinct authority from the King, and that it is not His Majesty's intention under the present circumstances to give any such authority."

The Queen, in spite of her advisers, would not give way. She desired passionately, anyhow, to witness the ceremony. On the day of the Coronation she drove to Westminster Abbey, only to be refused admission because she had no ticket. In vain her Chamberlain, Lord Hood, told the doorkeeper that this lady was the Queen of England ; the reply was that no one could be admitted without a peer's ticket. Lord Hood produced a ticket signed "Wellington," which would admit one person, but Her Majestv declined to enter except as Queen of England.

A few days after the Coronation the Queen was taken ill, and on August 7 she passed away. On her deathbed she said, "I do not know if in dying I shall suffer pain, but I do assure you I quit life without regret." In her will she expressed the desire that her body should be taken to Brunswick for interment, and that the inscription on her coffin should be:

HERE LIES
CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK,
THE INJURED QUEEN OF ENGLAND.

The death of the Queen made people forget her follies and think only of the unhappiness to which she had been subjected, and they determined to express their sense of regret by lining the streets through which the cortège would pass on the way to Harwich, where the coffin would be embarked. The Lord Mayor and Common Council announced their intention to meet the procession at Temple Bar and accompany it to the eastern boundary of the City.

The Government, however, selected a route through side-streets, so as to avoid the City. The people decreed otherwise. They were determined that the last honours should be paid. When the funeral procession reached Church Street, Kensington, up which it was to turn, that little thoroughfare had been dug up, even the water-pipes had been opened; it was impassable. It then, perforce, proceeded along the south side of Hyde Park, but it could not proceed by the official route, for every road was blocked by impenetrable masses of wagons and coaches. It had, therefore, ultimately to go along the Strand to Temple Bar, where the Lord Mayor in state rode at the head of the procession.

So, in her fifty-fourth year, died Caroline. Whatever may be thought of her indiscretions, of her undoubted follies, whatever view may be held of her innocence and guilt, there can only be one opinion about her courage. For a quarter of a century she, almost alone, stood up against persecution with her spirit indomitable. She never for a moment faltered, but, undaunted, faced the foe, that Prince of whom it was said that he hated only three people in the world—his father, his wife, and his daughter.

CHAPTER XVIII

LADY CONYNGHAM (died 1861)

The Prince of Wales infatuated—Much amusement caused by this—Lady Conyngham's beauty and charm—Lord Conyngham—Lady Stewart of the Household—"A Peep into a Cottage at Windsor"—The Conynghams accompany the King to Ireland—Lady Conyngham and Lady Hertford—The Conynghams' town house—Lord Mount-Charles—The Rev. Charles Sumner—Dr. James Stanier Clarke—Benjamin Bloomfield—Lord Francis Conyngham—William Joseph Denison—The last years of George IV.

THERE is yet another chapter to be unfolded in the history of the infatuations of George IV, and this last episode endured, so far as he was concerned, until his death. The lady who attracted him for this considerable period was Lady Conyngham. She was Elizabeth, daughter of Joseph Denison, of Denbies, Surrey, and in 1794 had married Henry, Viscount Conyngham, who was given an earldom three years later. In 1816 he was created Marquis Conyngham.

"Lady Hertford's day is closed," Lady Jerningham wrote in the summer of 1820, "and Lady Conyngham is now the meteor. She has a beautiful daughter grown up, but the mother is the object." The beautiful daughter was Lady Elizabeth Conyngham, and, as a matter of fact, after George became a widower, there were rumours that he proposed to espouse her. It is improbable that there was any basis for this gossip. In 1826 Lady Elizabeth married Charles, tenth Marquis of Huntly.

Lady Conyngham was fair and plump, not unlike what Mrs. Fitzherbert had been. She was certainly

not in her first youth, being, at the opening of the new reign, a wife of twenty-six years standing; but she was bright and amusing, and, as someone said of her, there were "no damned brains" about her. At the same time, she was intelligent enough to feather her nest thoroughly well during the years she basked in the royal favour.

Grantley Berkeley, in one of his many volumes of interesting reminiscences, has told of the fun that was poked at this middle-aged pair of turtle-doves. They were "talked of as Romeo and Juliet, then as Oberon and Titania; sometimes they were Hamlet and Ophelia, at others, Ferdinand and Miranda; and—alas for the devotion of courtiers!—not unfrequently they were referred to as Falstaff and Dame Quickly." Berkeley has also supplied a description of the lady, perhaps not untinged with malice. "Lady Conyngham made herself agreeable," he wrote. "Her eyes, of the favourite colour, were extremely animated in their expression; her transparent complexion, of the favourite roses and lilies, was always bright with the most winning smiles; and a sweetly musical voice, low and tender, as her August Friend liked the feminine tones to be, invariably repeated words that were pleasant to hear. In short the lady kept him in good humour with the world; and as she made it pretty clear that, in her conviction, he was a compound of Sardanapalus and Louis XIV, Alexander the Great and Augustus Cæsar, Alcibiades and the Admirable Crichton, he was on equally good terms with himself."

The King's passion for Lady Conyngham knew no bounds, and he was prepared to commit any folly to please her. It is said that he proposed to remove Lord Hertford from the office of Lord Chamberlain, and to

appoint in his place Lord Conyngham, and this at a time when the Queen's trial was proceeding. "Was there er such insanity at such a time?" Creevey wrote. "It is said the Ministers have exacted a promise from him not to make the change at least pending the trial." The Bill was withdrawn in November 1820; but it was not until December of the following year that Lord Conyngham was given high office in the Household, and then he was not appointed Lord Chamberlain, but Lord Steward.

In order that he might have Lady Conyngham always about him, George created the post of Lady Steward for her. She and her husband were always with the Court, both at Windsor and at Brighton. The Conynghams were given The Lodge as a residence when the King was at Windsor, and a now forgotten versifier wrote a ballad, "A Peep into a Cottage at Windsor; or, Love among the Roses."

Still the old hunter loves to *walk*
Where he has run before;
"A liquorish tooth" can make him talk,
When he can act no more.

And who so sweet as Mistress Q
To do what should be done,
To give the R——l George his due,
And cheer his setting sun?

To Qs the K——g was always partial,
And that the lady knows;
Her influence on a late c——t-m——l,
Beat all her husband's foes.

And gratitude now makes her bend
On G——e the *débonnaire*,
His *aged* face with rouge to mend,
And curl his wig with care.

To *starch his whiskers*, morn and night,
His eyebrows on to *glue*,
And what he wish'd, or wrong or right,
Determin'd was to do.

For this she in *the Cottage* lives,
To be the R-y-l nurse,
For this her h—b—d never grieves
His c-l—l in the Horse.

When the King paid an official visit to Ireland in August 1821 the Conynghams accompanied him. Indeed, he could scarcely bear her out of his sight. "I never heard anything to equal the King's infatuation and conduct towards Lady Conyngham," Freemantle wrote to the Duke of Buckingham. "She lived exclusively with him during the whole time he was in Ireland at the Phœnix Park. When he went to Slane [the Conynghams' seat in County Meath] she received him dressed out as for a drawing-room. He saluted her, and they then retired to her apartments." In Dublin, Lady Conyngham appeared little in public, and the King always hurried through the ceremonies in which he had to take part, in order to return to her side.

On the return to London there was a great rumpus. An Hibernian Ball was arranged to take place at Willis's Rooms, and the Lady Patronesses, among whom was Lady Hertford, were so ill-advised as not to include among their number Lady Conyngham. Lady Conyngham did not sit down under this, but started an opposition ball, to be given at the Opera House, enlisted the King as Patron, and all the same ladies as Patronesses, with the exception of Lady Hertford—whose fury, Creevey relates, was beyond all bounds. Society did not take kindly, however, to Lady Conyngham, and the royal ladies would have nothing to do with her, to the

great anger of the Prince Regent; nor was he less annoyed when they justified their action by saying that, after his insisting that they should not speak to the late Queen, how could they do so to Lady Conyngham?

The King showered gifts on Lady Conyngham. He gave her to wear the Crown sapphires which Cardinal York had given to the King. He presented her with a wonderful string of pearls. The royal carriages and horses were at her disposal and at the disposal of members of her family. "She lives at the King's expense," Greville noted in his Journals. "They do not possess a servant; even Lord Conyngham's valet de chambre is not properly their servant. They all have situations in the King's Household, from which they receive their pay, while they continue in the service of the Conynghams. They dine every day while in London at St. James's, and when they give a dinner it is cooked at St. James's and brought to [their house in] Hamilton Place in hackney-coaches, in machines made specially for that purpose; there is merely a fire lit in their kitchen for such things as must be heated on the spot. A more despicable scene cannot be exhibited than that which the interior of our Court presents—every base, low, and unmanly propensity, with selfishness, avarice, and a life of petty intrigue and mystery."

The Conyngham's elder son, Lord Mount-Charles, was appointed a Lord of the Bedchamber. Lord Mount-Charles's tutor, the Rev. Charles Sumner, was recommended by Lady Conyngham for preferment, and the King, in 1821, appointed him to a vacant canonry at Windsor. The Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, when he heard of this, refused to sanction the appointment, and declared in round terms that, if it went through, the Government would resign. There was nothing against

Sumner, who was an agreeable and a learned young man of thirty ; but the manner of his appointment could not be approved. Neither King nor Minister would yield the point for a long time, but in the end a compromise was effected. The canonry was given to Dr. James Stanier Clarke. Sumner did not suffer. He succeeded to the appointments Clarke had held, and so became Historiographer to the Crown, Chaplain to the Household at Carlton House, and Librarian to the King. In addition, George made him his private chaplain at Windsor. In 1826 he was consecrated Bishop of Llandaff, and in the following year translated to Winchester. When Benjamin Bloomfield, after a quarrel with Lady Conyngham, was removed from the office of Keeper of the Privy Purse, Lord Francis Conyngham carried out many of the duties associated with the post.

In 1825 there was trouble between the King and Lady Conyngham. She was beginning to get bored with what she called the " terrible restraint and confinement," and talked of going abroad. Whether she really intended to do so or not cannot be said, but Lord Lauderdale acted as mediator, and contrived to persuade her, or, anyhow, she let herself be persuaded, that " however blamable it was in her at first to get into her present situation, *now* it was her bounden duty to submit and go through with it." It is not easy to follow the argument ; but it sufficed, backed no doubt by more material inducements.

That Lady Conyngham's brother, William Joseph Denison, the millionaire banker, senior partner in the London House of Denison, Heywood, and Kennard, who was member of Parliament for Surrey from 1818 until his death thirty-one years later, was not so complaisant is made clear by the following passage in the Creevey Papers, dated February 1828 :

" When Mrs. Taylor and I were left alone about one this morning, she said : ' As I know, Mr. Creevey, I may trust you with anything, I must tell you poor Denison is broken-hearted about his sister, Lady Conyngham ; and his only relief, he says, is imparting his grief to me. According to his own account, he protested to her from the first against her living under the King's roof ; but the thing, instead of getting better, has become daily worse and worse. Not that even now he can suppose there is anything criminal between persons of their age, but that he never goes into society without having allusions too plain to be misunderstood ; and he lives in daily fear and expectation of the subject coming before Parliament. In short, such is his feeling that he has called formally upon his sister to leave her fat and fair friend and to go abroad. He has been backed in this application both by Lord Mount-Charles (Lady Conyngham's eldest surviving son) and Lady Strathaven, and he has told her his will is to be altered immediately if she hold on, but she treats all such interference only with bursts of passion and defiance, always relying upon Lady Hertford's case as her precedent and justification.' "

However, Denison's scruples, if not overcome, were silenced. What was in the will to which he referred is not known. Actually, though his sister survived him, he left the whole of his property to his nephew, Lord Albert Conyngham, on condition that he took the name of Denison. Lord Albert accepted the condition, and in the year he came into the estate was created Earl of Londesborough.

Lady Conyngham can scarcely have had an agreeable time during the last year or two of the King's life. He was seriously ill in 1829, and she remained in attendance. He never thoroughly regained his strength, and he had

fears, with the fate of his father always before him, that his mind might give way. He rarely got up before six in the evening, and his indolence was beyond all belief. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he could be induced to sign even the most important papers. His only pleasure seems to have been in relating interminable tales, more often than not forgetting the point of the story. He, who had been a great dandy in his day, was horrified by his appearance, and, save his Ministers, would see no one but Lady Conyngham. He closed the terrace and the public walks at Windsor, for he had the idea he was under observation. "I will not allow those maid-servants to look at me when I go in and out," he said one day, in impotent rage. "If I find they do so again, I will have them discharged."

At last the end drew nearer and nearer, and on June 24, 1830, he drew his last breath. All through his last illness Lady Conyngham was busy making preparations to leave the Castle. As some one said of her, "First she packed, and then she prayed, and then she packed again." It was calculated that during the last month she removed a couple of wagon-loads of jewellery, plate, and other valuables.

CHAPTER XIX

LADY HOLLAND (1770–1845)

A remarkable woman—Her imperiousness—Her first marriage—Divorced—Marries Lord Holland—Holland House—George Ticknor—Lord Melbourne—John William Ward—Sydney Smith—Macaulay—His conversational powers—"Brilliant flashes of silence"—Frequent visitors to Holland House—John Allen—Lord Sefton—Count d'Orsay—Lady Holland's cat—Lord Holland—The attraction of Holland House—Lady Holland a staunch Whig.

LADY HOLLAND was what would now be called "a card." She was, indeed, a very remarkable woman. Her imperiousness was in itself enough to keep life at a respectable distance, yet her house was always filled with visitors, and visitors for the most part of high distinction in some branch or other of politics, literature, or art. A proud woman, her attitude was probably the result of the unfortunate position in which she placed herself when in her twenties, but the unfortunate position was one that she never had any cause afterwards to regret.

Elizabeth Vassall, who was born in 1770, was the daughter of Richard Vassall, of Jamaica. Thirty years later she became possessed, under the will of her grandfather, of considerable estates in Jamaica, the condition of inheritance being that she assumed the name of Vassall only after her Christian name. At the age of sixteen she married Sir Geoffrey Webster, Bart., of Battle Abbey, Sussex. After some years of married life she eloped with Henry Richard Fox, third Baron Holland, whom she married in 1797 so soon as the divorce was pronounced.

Lord Holland, who was three years younger than his

wife, was the son of Stephen, second Lord Holland, and nephew of Charles James Fox, who looked after him during his minority. It was while travelling abroad that he met Lady Webster, as she then was. They fell in love with one another, and returned together to England. They made no secret of their intimacy, living under the same roof. There was a son of this union, before marriage, Charles Richard Fox, who was formally acknowledged as his son by Lord Holland, and who married firstly Lady Mary Fitzclarence, second daughter of Mrs. Jordan and William IV. Lady Holland, who had borne her first husband two children, had also two legitimate sons by Lord Holland, Stephen, who died in infancy, and Henry, who succeeded to the title.

After the marriage Holland House became the resort of the wits and men of letters of the day. Lady Holland certainly had the gift of making her guests pleased with everybody—except occasionally herself. She trotted them out one after another to let them show off their paces. Her dictatorial manner, of course, led to her being occasionally rebuffed. She was very prettily scored off by the American historian, George Ticknor. She was laying down the law, and asserted that New England had originally been a convict settlement: to which Ticknor replied that he did not know about that, but that he was aware that in the King's Chapel at Boston there was a monument to one of the Vassalls, who had been an early settler in Massachusetts.

She ordered everybody about as she chose. Lord Melbourne was told to change his seat at the dinner-table, and left the room in a rage, saying, "I'll be damned if I dine with you at all." John William Ward was so angry at the treatment once accorded to him that he ignored all her future invitations. As a rule, however,

she was not taken so seriously. She was devoted to Sydney Smith, but attempted to tyrannise over him. "Ring the bell," she said to him bluntly one day. "Certainly," he retorted, "and shall I sweep the room?" At her overcrowded dining-table she abruptly told Henry Luttrell to make room for yet another guest. Luttrell, who was never at a loss, looked at her with an affectation of bluntness, and replied, without moving: "It certainly must be made, because it doesn't exist."

Macaulay was a very frequent visitor at Holland House. His biographer, Sir George Trevelyan, says: "Lady Holland listened to him with unwonted deference, and scolded with a circumspection that was in itself a compliment." At the same time there is no doubt that she did not carry the deference too far.

Some idea of Macaulay's conversation, and Lady Holland's attitude towards it, is given by Charles Greville. The name of Sir Thomas Munro was mentioned. "Lady Holland," says the diarist, "did not know why Sir Thomas Munro was so distinguished; when Macaulay explained all that he had ever said, done, written, or thought, and vindicated his claim to the title of a great man, till Lady Holland got bored with Sir Thomas, told Macaulay she had had enough of him, and would have no more. This would have dashed and silenced an ordinary talker, but to Macaulay it was no more than replacing a book on its shelf, and he was as ready as ever to open on any other subject. It would be impossible to follow and describe the various mazes of conversation, all of which he threaded with an ease that was always astonishing and instructive, and generally interesting and amusing. When we went upstairs we got upon the Fathers of the Church. Allen asked Macaulay if he had read much of the Fathers. He said, not a great deal.

He had read Chrysostom, when he was in India; that is, he had turned over the leaves and for a few months had read him for two or three hours every morning before breakfast; and he had read some of Athanasius. 'I remember a sermon,' he said, 'of Chrysostom's in praise of the Bishop of Antioch'; and then he proceeded to give us the substance of this sermon till Lady Holland got tired of the Fathers, again put her extinguisher on Chrysostom as she had done on Munro, and with a sort of derision, and as if to have the pleasure of puzzling Macaulay, she turned to him and said, 'Pray, Macaulay, what was the origin of a *doll*? When were dolls first mentioned in history?' Macaulay was, however, just as much up to the dolls as he was to the Fathers, and instantly replied that the Roman children had their dolls, which they offered up to Venus, when they grew older; and quoted Persius for

Veneri donatæ a virgine puppæ,

and I have not the least doubt, if he had been allowed to proceed, he would have told us who was the Chenevix of ancient Rome, and the name of the first baby that ever handled a doll."

On the other hand, there is a story that at a dinner-party Lady Holland sent Macaulay a message: "Do not monopolise the conversation." Macaulay was silent, and things became dull and then duller, until the hostess, in despair, sent another note: "For Heaven's sake, do monopolise the conversation." It was at Holland House that someone referred to Macaulay's "brilliant flashes of silence," for which one could not be sufficiently grateful.

Thomas Campbell was a frequent visitor to Holland House (until Lady Holland offended him deeply), and

Tom Moore, and "Monk" Lewis, and Samuel Rogers, and Byron, and Charles Greville. John Allen, the writer on history and politics, lived at Holland House. Macaulay spoke of him as "a man of vast information and great conversational powers"—and in the matter of conversation no one spoke with greater authority; and Byron thought him one of the best informed and ablest men he had met. Macaulay said that Lady Holland treated Allen like a negro slave, but Allen seems to have borne with her manner well enough.

Creevey has a good story in which Allen is introduced. "Sefton was very good fun about a morning call on Lady Holland," he wrote to Miss Ord in 1828. "Amongst other things, she talked about ages, and observed that Lord Sefton and Lord Holland were of the same age—about fifty-six. 'For myself,' she said, 'I believe I am near the same'; and then, the page being called, she said: 'Go and ask Mr. Allen how old I am.' As the house is so small and the rooms so near, they heard Allen holloa out in no very melodious tones: 'She is fifty-seven.' But Lady Holland was not content with this, and said it was much too old for her, and made the page go back again; and again they heard Allen roar in a much louder voice: 'I tell you she's fifty-seven.'"

Five years later Creevey gives another impression of Lady Holland: "I met Lady Holland again on Thursday at Lord Sefton's. She began by complaining of the slipperiness of the courtyard, and of the danger of her horses falling, to which Sefton replied that it should be gravelled the next time she did him the honour of dining there. She then began to sniff, and, turning her eyes to various pots filled with beautiful roses and all kinds of flowers, she said: 'Lord Sefton, I must beg of you to have those flowers taken out of this room, they are

so much too powerful for me.' Sefton and his valet, Paoli, actually carried the table and all its contents out of the room. Then poor dear little Lady Sefton, who has always a posy as large as life at her breast when she is dressed, took it out in the humblest manner, and said : ' Perhaps, Lady Holland, this nosegay may be too much for you.' But the other was pleased to allow her to keep it, though by no means in a very gracious manner. Then, when the candles were lighted at the close of dinner, she would have three put out, as being too much and too near her. Was there ever ? "

This recalls the story of Lady Holland, who was inclined to *embonpoint,* at dinner letting her handkerchief fall to the ground. Count d'Orsay, who was sitting next to her, picked it up. It fell again. Again he stooped and gave it her. It fell a third time. This was too much for the dandy. " Is it not, madame," he said, " that it would be more quick if I sat on the floor and handed it up ? "

She was always indulging in new fads, irrespective of the effect of them upon her intimates. "*A propos* to Lady Holland," Creevey wrote in 1822, " in addition to all her former insults upon the town, she has set up a huge *cat,* which is never permitted out of her sight, and to whose vagaries she demands unqualified submission from all her visitors. Rogers, it seems, has already sustained considerable injury in a personal affair with this animal. Brougham only keeps *him* or *her* at arm's length by snuff, and Luttrell has sent in a formal resignation of all further visits till this odious new favourite is dismissed the Cabinet."

There must have been charm about her, for most people liked well enough to go there. Lady Charlotte Campbell has put on record an account of one of her

visits: "I went to Holland House; a formal, fearful piece of amusement. Lady Holland on her throne as usual: very gracious to me, but still '*gracious*.' I found no subject of conversation, and she was also, for her, unusually dull: so time went on heavily. R[ogers] and Macaulay were there, but even they did not shine with their usual brilliancy. Mrs. R[owton] and Lady W. R[ussell] were also present. I think marriage has done much good to the latter. She seems softened, and is, as ever she was, very *distinguée*, and very agreeable. Her husband appears to be a shy, gentlemanly looking person. I could not judge what else he was, and feared to talk with him. Somehow or other I lost my identity in that society, and yet it appeared to offer much entertainment. Lady H[olland] kept me strictly under her wing, and tied me down, as it were, to her chair. She is now in bad health, and there is an excuse for her being placed above everybody else, and calling all the people by her, as though she had a crown and sceptre in either hand. But I am told she always did so. It must make a *gêne* in the society. But Lord H[olland] is a delightful person, and much is borne to obtain his presence."

Creevey also gives a description of these gatherings: "Cowper took me to Lady Holland's, where her ladyship looked as forlorn and discontented as ever she could look. She was in state with Henry at her feet—few men—no ladies, and the whole concern to the greatest degree sombre. Her great aversion at present is Lady Jersey, as taking her company from her, which I don't wonder at, as Cowper and I soon went there, and found a very merry party, cracking their jokes about a round table. Lady Jersey herself is a host, and then there were Brougham, Grey, Lambton, Lady Sefton, Lord A. Hamilton, Cowper, and myself: so it was all very well."

Everybody grumbled but everyone went. Greville, who dined at Holland House in November 1832, wrote : " Lady Holland is unwell, fancies she must dine at five o'clock, and exerts her power over society by making everybody go out there at that hour, though nothing can be more inconvenient than thus shortening the day, and nothing more tiresome than such lengthening of the evening. Rogers and Luttrell were staying there. The *tableau* of the house is this : Before dinner, Lady Holland affecting illness and almost dissolution, but with a very respectable appetite, and after dinner in high force and vigour ; Lord Holland, with his chalkstones and unable to walk, lying on his couch in very good spirits and talking away ; Luttrell and Rogers walking about, and ever and anon looking despairingly at the clock and making short excursions from the drawing-room ; Allen surly and disputatious, poring over the newspapers, and replying in monosyllables (generally negative) to whatever is said to him. . . . Talleyrand generally comes at ten or eleven, and stays as long as they will let him. Though everybody who goes there finds something to abuse or to ridicule in the mistress of the house, or its ways, all continue to go ; all like it more or less ; and whenever, by the death of either, it shall come to an end, a vacuum will be made in society which nothing will supply. It is the house of all Europe ; the world will suffer by the loss ; and it may with truth be said that it will eclipse the gaiety of nations."

A determined Whig, politics were a very serious matter with Lady Holland. " My jokes about Wellesley are in great request," Creevey wrote in 1812. " Lady Holland said to me one Sunday in the drawing-room after dinner : ' Come here and sit by me, you *mischievous* toad, and promise that you won't begin upon the new Government

with your jokes. When you do, begin with those *Grenvilles.*' " She aspired to be a leader of her party, and provoked the ire of Brougham, who wrote to Creevey in 1816: " Nothing, for instance, can be more unpropitious than the plan for carrying on the party by a *coterie* at Lady Holland's elbow, which cannot be submitted to for a moment, even, I should think, by those who belong to her *coterie*; at least, I know no one but the Coles, [Francis] Horner, and the Pope [John Wishaw] who can bear it."

Lady Holland was solidly with the King in his persecution of Queen Caroline. When Lord Holland went to Oxford in January 1821, to attend a meeting in support of Her Majesty, he told Creevey that it was with the greatest difficulty his wife let him go, and he begged Creevey not to mention it before her, as it was a very sore subject.

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